

What is the Secret of a Pretty Face?

By Dr. William Carter

Would you like the short answer or the Dr. Carter (long) answer? The shortest answer in a word would be: "Combinations."

To explain, with aesthetics the best results are always obtained by utilizing more than one modality. Let us start by talking about a simple condition: active expression wrinkles. When we make an expression, our facial muscles crease the skin. Many of us are quite animated and so express and crease or wrinkle our facial skin often. There is a theory in our field that once a person makes the same expression 20,000 times, that individual begins to convert their active expression line(s) into fixed static creases that are visible even without making an active expression. These creases then become fixed wrinkles or "memory etch lines."



Clearly, therefore, not expressing with our faces would be a good thing from a wrinkle prevention standpoint. But, these people would not be very interesting to look at or to interact with.

Enter the darlings of the aesthetic world—the neuromodulators—Botox, Dysport, and Xeomin. These all, by the way, contain the same identical 130 kilo Dalton protein and are all FDA approved. There are at least 32 independent studies to document that they are all the same in safety, duration of action, and effectiveness to relax facial expression muscles. Xeomin is the least expensive for the injector to purchase from the manufacturer. Often, therefore, Xeomin represents the best value to the consumer. A perfect combination to go along with one of these agents would be a retinoid like retinol or Retin-A. Retinoids thicken the dermis of the skin and make it more resistive to creasing from repeated expressing. Another perfect combination with a neuromodulator would be a facial filler (one of the hyaluronic acid products like Restylane/Perlane/Juvaderm/Belotero, Radiesse, or even Sculptra).

What if a person is a little bit older or has made a lot of faces (and hence, wrinkles) in their lifetime? This may be a time when any of several additional options could be very useful. For example, some sort of fractional laser treatment or dermal needling could be used to smooth and tighten the skin. Coupling a skin-tightening laser with Ultherapy is a perfect combination. Ultherapy lifts and tightens the deeper skin support structure, the SMAS (superficial musculo-aponeurotic system). Ultherapy was discussed in the last issue of *FLL*. Physician-grade topical products, other lasers, microdermabrasion, and/or chemical peels can further address unevenness of skin tone, redness of the skin, or texture abnormalities.

Protection from sun UV damage is an important thing to consider whenever a combined approach is used to maximize and maintain the appearance gains from any other technique. With sun blocks, remember to be certain that whatever is selected protects against UVA as well as UVB. Evidence to date further suggests

that the physical blocks, that is, those containing either zinc or titanium, are the safest and among the most effective. We have liked the EltaMD products at Medical Cosmetics.

One of the most useful and effective combinations of all is that of a well-trained/experienced aesthetic physician and a knowledgeable/enthusiastic esthetician. In fact, Medical Cosmetics is at this time very pleased to announce the addition of **Melissa Hilton** to our staff! Melissa brings valuable experience with many advanced skin care products, peels, microdermabrasion,

several lasers, and Ultherapy. Her enthusiasm, and patient-oriented approach, is appreciated and exciting. Please stop in and say "Hi" to Melissa as well as get acquainted with her and the office. Welcome Melissa! 🌸

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Since 1999 Dr. Carter has been extensively involved in all office-based things having to do with appearance optimization. He has performed over 35,000 Botox treatments and thousands of laser and filler procedures. He maintains active practices in Lancaster, Dauphin, and York counties.



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