

Beyond Botox

In our quest for eternal youth, we bring you **the latest emerging non-surgical treatments** to help thwart the ageing process

By Kate Turner

In 2012, the total global market for anti-ageing products and services was valued at \$249.3 billion and projected to increase to \$345.8 billion by 2018. "Driving this growth is the explosion in non-invasive anti-ageing treatments that have a low risk profile, require little to no downtime and are becoming increasingly affordable to more and more people," explains Dr Anushka Reddy, president of the South African Association of Cosmetic Doctors (SAACD).

So what's out there aside from the usual Botox, dermal fillers and other skin rejuvenation procedures? We research the risks, possible complications and side effects of the non-invasive procedures gaining popularity.

Clear + Brilliant

What is it?

A safe "fractional" laser that is split into thousands of microscopic treatment zones that target a fraction of the skin, inch by inch. Roughly analogous to a photographic image being enhanced pixel by pixel. "The laser energy drills millions of microscopic treatment zones into the surface of your skin, kicking the production of healing collagen into overdrive, which replaces damaged skin with healthy, younger-looking tissue," explains dermatologist Dr Christina Bowman. "It basically refreshes your skin from the inside out. We call it the 'baby Fraxel' because it's very gentle and in fact specially designed to minimise the side effects of typical laser treatments." The procedure is not painful (a topical numbing cream is applied first), with some likening the laser to a sensation like an "electric cat's tongue licking my face".

Side effects?

Immediately following a session you'll experience redness and swelling, much like a sunburn, but the hot tautness will dissipate overnight. For

up to a week afterwards your skin will *feel* sandpaper, but will *appear* radiant – discolouration will vanish and there's neither peeling nor blotchiness. No downtime means you can be back at work the following morning.

Expected results

More even skin tone, boosted radiance, reduced pore size and enhanced elasticity. By day five your skin will appear noticeably springier, plumper and clearer.

Cost?

R2 500 per session.

How many sessions before I see results?

The results, once the recommend six treatments are done, are visible for up to a year. Bi-annual sessions are then recommended for maintenance purposes, and some die-hard proponents have even billed the procedure as being a preventative one when used as a monthly session to keep early signs of ageing at bay – but the jury is still out, scientifically speaking.

Let's do this! *Pure Esthetics, Parkmore, Joburg. 011 784 1168 or christina@pureesthetics.co.za*

Platelet-Rich Plasma Facial (so-called Vampire Facial)

What is it?

Popular amongst younger patients (late 30s and early 40s) due to a cult celebrity following, this treatment was actually originally designed to help repair injured skin. The jury is still out as to its effectiveness as a cosmetic procedure though, as there's no scientific evidence to back it up. "With the Vampire Facial we combine micro-needling and stem cell therapy," explains aesthetic physician Dr Kamlen Pillay. "During the rolling we add the stem cells back into the skin. It is particularly effective for crêpey skin under the eyes, which is tricky to treat using other non-invasive methods."

Basically, it's a form of Collagen Induction Therapy (CIT), but thanks to the exuberant use of needles, it is also not without considerable pain, this despite the application of anaesthetic cream *and* an analgesic injection. It involves harvesting around 10ml of the patient's own blood, usually from the crook of the arm, much like when you donate blood. Your blood is then placed in a centrifuge and its components separated into three test tubes: deep red, a clear viscous gel and a urea-coloured yellow. Somewhere in there is the good stuff: the antioxidant-rich platelet plasma, which is the bit that is then re-injected into the face.

Side effects?

The skin will be red in appearance for 24-48 hours, much like sunburn, with some minor bleeding and sometimes mild bruising around the eyes. But that's about it, which, considering the pain mid-procedure, is quite remarkable. You can return to work the next day.

Expected results

Results supposedly gather momentum over ensuing months, providing a gradual improvement and a firmer, plumper appearance of the skin.

Cost?

The roller costs R2 500 and can be reused for up to eight sessions. Each session of plasma re-injection, combined with micro-needling costs about R7 300.

How many sessions before I see results?

You won't see the full effects with only one treatment, so at least six to eight sessions (each spaced about six weeks apart) are recommended.

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BEAUTY

3D Vector (specifically for jowls)

What is it?

It's about restructuring the facial anatomy to replace lost volume. "Large particle dermal fillers are injected to rebuild the 3D nature of the face, which makes this procedure a superb option to treat sagging skin as in the case of facial jowls," says Dr Reddy. 3D Vector techniques lift the skin upward and plump it outward to make the most of the skin available and to restore that youthful shape to the jawline. Large particle dermal fillers are used to ensure placement is stable and that long-term results are seen.

Side effects?

The latest way to administer fillers is with a micro-cannula, which decreases trauma to the tissues, making the treatment safer, with far less bruising than regular dermal filler injection techniques. You can be back at work the same day. Thanks to an injection of local anaesthetic, the procedure is virtually pain-free.

Expected results

Surgery-free softened jowls, a reshaped jawline and a youthful facial symmetry. The downturned corners of the mouth can also be lifted, which goes a long way towards eliminating the "unimpressed" veneer that tired, saggy skin gives when one is merely being impassive.

Cost?

You're looking at around a R16 000 investment.

How many sessions before I see results?

The type of filler used ensures placement is stable and that results are noticeable for up to 18-24 months. Each session takes about 40 minutes to complete.

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Meso-needling

What is it?

A coalition between two interesting fields: mesotherapy and skin needling. In mesotherapy, low dosages of rejuvenating medication are injected over the area of treatment using multiple fine injections. In skin needling a roller performs multiple punctures with dry needles to stimulate the epidermis and dermis, which initiates a wound-healing cascade and attendant collagen production.

Combine the two and you get meso-needling, where new high-technology skin needling is coupled with high-quality mesotherapy chemicals.

Side effects?

It's a little bit painful because of the "needling" action. But application of a topical anaesthetic cream prior to treatment does help with this. No downtime afterwards and redness disappears completely within 48 hours.

Expected results

Skin is "redensified", appearing firmer and plumper. This procedure is particularly effective for the difficult-to-treat areas of the neck and décolleté.

Cost?

From R1 500 per session.

How many sessions before I see results?

From the first session you will notice radiance and hydration.

The skin tightening and wrinkle reduction is noticed from the third session.

Space your sessions two to three weeks apart.

Let's do this! *Dr Riekie Smit, Parkview Shopping Centre, Pretoria East. 012 992 6042 or medical@ackmain.com.*

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What else?

- *E-Matrix A new fractional skin rejuvenation device, using bipolar radiofrequency energy to heat and ablate below the skin surface, producing new collagen and revealing smoother, brighter and tighter-appearing skin. It helps restore a more youthful appearance without aggressive damage – perfect for wrinkles, collagen recovery, scarring treatments, acne and facial rejuvenation*
- *Subcision Doctors administer this treatment by using a needle to break the fibrous bands beneath the skin that cause acne scarring. By breaking the bands, a releasing action occurs and the result is smoother-looking skin. Sometimes dermal fillers are injected beneath the scar, to improve hydration and boost the collagen-production process.*

From the WWW (world weird web)

Crystal Tomato for pigmentation *A new medicinal treatment option in the form of a tablet a day that inhibits the production of melanin (responsible for skin pigment). Studies suggest that patients can lighten their skin and treat pigmentation simply by ingesting these pills (which contain colourless carotenoids) on a daily basis. This type of tablet treatment will see a rise in the coming years, but demands more research before being fully endorsed by the medical fraternity.*

References available on request