

a gentler approach

Sydney cosmetic physician **Dr Joseph Hkeik** spoke with Kandy Shepherd about the benefits of nonsurgical facial rejuvenation.

If you are looking to rejuvenate your appearance with a cosmetic procedure, surgery may not always be the only answer. Nonsurgical procedures can achieve good results, and they generally have fewer side effects and involve less downtime.

Sydney cosmetic physician Dr Joseph Hkeik says he finds his patients are delighted with the results of many non-surgical techniques. Minimally-invasive procedures are most popular amongst people who want to improve facial wrinkles or skin imperfections such as sun damage, pigmentation and acne scarring, but don't want or need surgery.

'Treating wrinkles with Botox Cosmetic is my most requested procedure,' Dr Hkeik says. 'I find it's safe and it can achieve great results. It gives patients a smoother, more rested appearance. Botox treatments take around ten minutes and have virtually no downtime, so they can be performed as a "lunchtime procedure".'

Dr Hkeik explains Botox injections work by reducing the activity of the muscles that cause frown lines and crow's feet to form over time. The effects start to be apparent within a week and usually last for about four months. He also uses injectable dermal fillers to treat patients with deeper, static wrinkles that come with age and years of sun exposure.

Dr Hkeik uses dermal fillers for lip augmentation, and to treat the deep lines running down the side of the mouth from the nose to the mouth (nasolabial folds). It can also be used on the marionette lines that run from the corner of the mouth, and the accordion lines on the cheeks. The filler is injected into the superficial layer of the skin and, according to Dr Hkeik, gives immediate results in just one session.

Different fillers are used according to each patient's individual needs. Human collagen (Cosmoderm and Cosmoplast) and hyaluronic acid (Restylane) can be highly effective in treating wrinkles and are gradually reabsorbed by the body. Where appropriate, Dr Hkeik uses longer-lasting fillers such as Aquamid in areas of the face that do not normally change with age. Sculptra can also be used to replace lost facial volume, improving the appearance of sunken areas such as the cheeks and indentations in the skin.

Dermal filler injections usually have minimal side effects, and Dr Hkeik says the fillers he uses do not require an allergy test. 'There can be some initial bruising and swelling, but this can be covered with cosmetics so the patient

can return straight to work,' says Dr Hkeik.

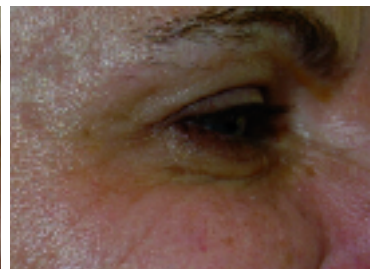
Microdermabrasion is another 'lunchtime treatment' that can rejuvenate the skin. Dr Hkeik uses the Diamond Peel to exfoliate the top layer of the skin – this utilises fine diamond chips to deeply exfoliate and reveal smoother skin beneath. Microdermabrasion can also be used before treatment with the Environ Ionzyme DF machine. 'This machine uses electric current and sound waves to push Vitamin A and E treatments deep into the exfoliated skin where the cells can take up the active ingredients in the product. Afterwards, most patients see a glow to their skin, and an immediate improvement in fine lines and wrinkles. In the long term it can stimulate collagen regeneration, which provides the structural support for the skin. Dr Hkeik recommends four to six weekly or fortnightly DF sessions followed by a maintenance treatment every two to three months.

Dr Hkeik says it is important to discuss each patient's expectations and wants. The patient's skin and facial structure should be assessed, and lifestyle factors such as smoking and sun exposure should also be considered. Age is important too, as collagen normally diminishes in women over 40, and there is an increased risk of osteoporosis, which can lead to a loss of bone structure and collapsing of the skin.

'Each nonsurgical treatment works differently and there is no set formula,' says Dr Hkeik. 'A skilled doctor will be able to decide which treatment, or combination of treatments, is most effective for each individual patient.' **acsm**



BEFORE



Two weeks AFTER Botox, microdermabrasion and DF treatments by Dr Hkeik



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