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**The “Lunchtime Facelift”: It can work small wonders**

By David J. Levens, MD, PA, FACS

There’s no question that for patients with significant sagging skin at the jaw line, the neck or upper/lower eyelids, plastic surgery offers the only real solution. Excess skin simply can’t be wished away; it has to be removed.

However, lots of people aren’t ready to invest the time or money in traditional surgical procedures. Others just don’t like the idea of having any surgery that is not medically necessary. Happily, thanks to advances in minimally invasive procedures and treatments, there are better non-surgical options than ever before.

The so-called “lunchtime facelift” is a great example.

A combination of Botox® and injectable fillers are used to reduce frown lines, minimize “crow’s feet”, plump up cheeks, fill in “smoker’s lines” above the lips, soften “laugh lines” and even camouflage under-eye puffiness and modest amounts of excess skin at the jaw line—all in about an hour.

Here’s how it works.

To reduce frown lines, forehead lines, “crow’s feet” and fine lines at the outside of the lower eyelid, Botox® is injected into underlying muscles. This paralyzes the muscles so emotion-based facial responses (frowns, squinting, eyebrow raising) become literally impossible and the skin is able to relax and unwrinkle. If the creases are deep, an injectable filler such as Restylane® or Radiesse®, can be used to fill them.

“Bags” under the eyes are normal fat around the eye that becomes more visible as support tissues weaken and upper cheek tissue begins to descend with age. To camouflage this under-eye puffiness, a tiny needle is used to make a series of filler injections into the tear trough between nose and under eye/ upper cheek area just where the puffiness stops. This can create a fairly seamless line between lower lid and upper cheek, making the “bags” seem to disappear.

Fillers can also be used to plump up cheeks which have become hollow or sunken. This type of contouring can give the cheeks a fuller, more youthful appearance and in some cases create the impression of higher cheekbones.

A variety of areas can be treated around the mouth to reduce the telltale signs of aging. Injecting fillers into the nasolabial fold between the nose and corners of the mouth can significantly reduce the appearance of “laugh lines.” The same can be done in the

labiomental fold between the corners of the mouth and the chin to reduce “marionette lines”. If there is fairly minor skin sagging along the jaw line, fillers can also be injected alongside the sagging skin to even out the area and reduce the perception of a jowl.

It is becoming more common to use a combination of Botox® and fillers to treat “smoker’s lines” above the upper lip. Botox® can be injected to relax the muscles and fillers to reduce creases. This combination can also subtly lift the upper lip and make it look fuller. For even more fullness, fillers can be injected directly into the upper and lower lips. The same combination of Botox® and fillers can be used to “lift” the corners of the mouth if the mouth tends to turn downward at the corners.

When combining Botox® and fillers, it is extremely important that each be injected in the proper amounts and in precisely the right locations. If areas are overcorrected, the result can be a bland, expressionless look.

For a “lunchtime facelift”, only topical anesthetic creams are used, and after, cold packs are applied to the treated areas to reduce swelling and the patient can return to work, repeating cold pack applications as convenient. Each patient’s skin responds differently, but typically there is some swelling in treated areas for 2-4 days. Bruising can last one to two weeks but can usually be covered with makeup. Vitamin K, taken orally and applied topically, can hasten bruise healing.

Not every patient needs or wants improvement in all the areas described as a “lunchtime facelift”. During an initial consultation (usually complimentary), the surgeon and patient pinpoint the exact areas to be treated and what outcomes to expect.

The results of a full or partial “lunchtime facelift” can be fairly dramatic. For a fraction of the cost and downtime of surgery, a patient can look considerably, noticeably refreshed. Gone (or greatly reduced) are those annoying little bags, bulges and sags that made looking in the mirror every morning so discouraging.

Of course, the downside of the “lunchtime facelift” is that the results are temporary. Depending on the type of fillers used, the improvements last between six and nine months. A consistent regimen of facials and corrective skin care products can enhance treatment results and prepare the skin for repeat treatments. #

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