

Plump Me Up

Men and women can take advantage of a number of injectables similar to Botox to restore some of the youthful “plumpness” or smoothness of their faces. Collagen and fat treatments won’t produce the dramatic results of more invasive surgeries like facelifts or carbon dioxide laser skin resurfacing, but they can slightly diminish the early signs of aging and offer a faster recovery time.

Collagen is a protein that acts as a support structure for the skin. As we age, we start to lose collagen and the skin’s accompanying elasticity and “full” look. Collagen injections temporarily fill facial lines—particularly in the forehead, around the mouth and “crow’s feet”—and “plump up” lips, giving them that more sensuous look so favored by celebrities during the past decade. Most collagen treatments are used to replace the collagen loss that often occurs in the folds between the nose and sides of the mouth, says Hass.

lergic to bovine collagen, so doctors should perform a skin test one month before performing the actual procedure.

An alternative to collagen is to harvest fat from the patient’s own body. Brad Herman, MD, a board-certified plastic surgeon who practices in Miami, says autologous fat grafting is very popular among local patients. “A lot of the patients that I would have done facelifts on 10 years ago I’m now treating with autologous fat grafting instead,” he says. “The earliest signs of aging—wrinkles on the face, around the mouth or in the cheek areas, are not really caused because the skin has stretched or by gravity. They occur because we lose the fat in our face as we get older. That loss of fat causes a deflation of the face, and, therefore, there ends up being extra skin.”

Herman uses liposuction to remove fat from, for example, the patient’s abdomen. He then processes the fat in the operating room, removing the dead fat cells and then injecting the living fat cells into the

