

# The Hottest Trends in Facial Plastic Surgery

Today, more patients are turning to facial cosmetic surgery to enhance and rejuvenate their facial appearance.



**A**ccording to an annual study by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, there was a 22% percent increase in cosmetic non-surgical procedures since 2004. This was primarily an increase in minimally invasive procedures, such as filler injections, which was up 115%, and Botox which was up 107%, and surgeries such as Blepharoplasty. We talked with Dr. Alexander Ramirez, a Facial Plastic Surgeon who is the medical director at FACES, to learn about the newest and most advanced procedures available to patients.

**WHAT ARE THE REASONS PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO COSMETIC SURGERY?**

The primary reason is that patients want their appearance to match how they feel inside. The baby boomers are a generation that often smoked earlier in their life and used to worship the sun. These factors lead to premature aging and cause the skin to sag, lines to become more pronounced, and bags to develop. As a result, this generation of patients is turning to cosmetic surgery to match their physical appearance to the youthfulness they feel inside. Most patients do not want an extreme makeover or a drastic change in appearance. They want to rejuvenate their appearance so that they look less tired or fatigued. And they want to enhance their natural features so that they look younger and their best. The key is that current advances in medicine have brought about numerous new procedures that can achieve these goals, create natural results, have recovery time, are less expensive, and are safe.

**THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF MEDIA ATTENTION ON THE THREADLIFT PROCEDURE—A NO INCISION FACELIFT. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE?**

The ThreadLift procedure has certainly received a lot of attention since it became

FDA approved several months ago. It has been on Oprah, the Today show, and multiple other television shows and this has generated a lot of interest. The procedure is an in-office procedure, performed under local anesthesia that only takes about 60 minutes. A patient walks in, walks out, and needs about 5-7 days of recovery time, although there are certainly patients that look great in a matter of days. No incision is made and a scalpel is not even necessary. The procedure used a special FDA approved suture called a Contour Thread. This suture has small barbs on it that allow it to be introduced in one direction and then when pulled back, lifts tissue because of the barbs. The Thread is placed under the skin with a needle so there is little tissue trauma (thus less down time) and minimal risk. As a result, the procedure is very safe.

**WHAT TISSUES CAN YOU LIFT WITH THE CONTOUR THREADS? CAN YOU DO A FACELIFT?**

The threads really work best in three locations. You can raise the eyebrow, the cheek and jowl area (lower face), and the neck. You can do one area or all three areas. It is much like a facelift. During a facelift surgery, the sagging tissues of the lower two-third of the face and the neck area are raised and repositioned to their original position. This includes skin, fascia, and muscle. In contrast, the ThreadLift only repositions the skin. You can think of it as perhaps 60% of a facelift. In a lot of patient, this is all they need. If you every pull back on the skin with your hands to lift the skin, then that is what the ThreadLift can achieve.

**WHAT IS A FILLER? AND WHAT IS IT USED FOR?**

A filler is a material that is injected into the skin to fill a line, wrinkle, or groove. It works best in static lines, those that are not caused by muscle activity. This is primarily the lines of the lower face and around the mouth. It can also be used to augment structures, so

if the lips are small you can make them fuller with a filler. These treatments are done in the office, usually with topical anesthesia and/or dental nerve blocks, and can be done at a lunch break. There is usually minimal swelling and patient can return to regular activities the same day or by the next day. Collagen used to be the gold standard when it came to fillers; however, it only lasted 2 months. Recently, the Hyaluronic Acid (HA) fillers have been developed and have really become the new gold standard. Hyaluronic acid is a natural component of the skin so it can be injected without the need for a skin test. It is a clear gel that once injected attracts water. As a result, part of the volume it provides is by water. That is why it looks so natural. The best part is that is last approximately 4-6 months. So this is much longer than Collagen.

**WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HYALURONIC ACID FILLERS?**

The first HA filler to be FDA approved was Resylane. Of the HA fillers, this probably lasts the longest, approximately 6 months. It does cause some bruising and swelling and usually requires a dental nerve block for the treatment. Another FDA approved alternative is Captique. This HA probably lasts a little less, but it does not cause much swelling or bruising and only requires topical anesthesia. The treatment really does not hurt very much. Both of these HA fillers are non-animal stabilized HA. They are created in laboratory from cultures. Hyaloform Plus, which is the other FDA approved HA, is the only one obtained from rooster combs. Despite being from animals, it still does not require a skin test. It last about 4 months.

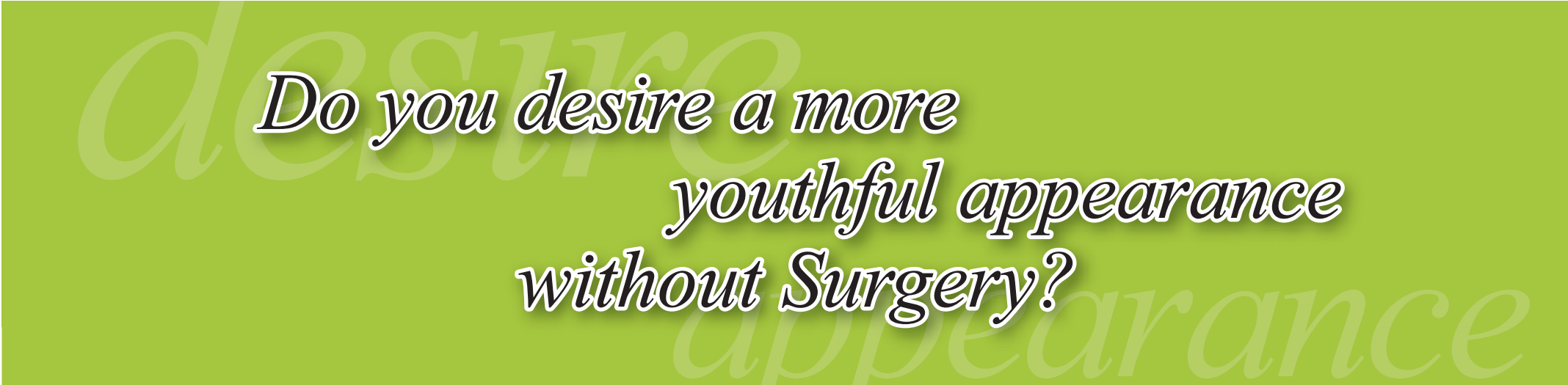
**WHAT IS BOTOX? IS IT SAFE?**

Botox is a highly purified botulinum toxin that is produced and distributed by Allergan Corporation. It is, in fact, a poison. However, it is so purified and the calculations

for the doses and effects have been studied so extensively that the treatment doses are extremely safe. In addition, the doses for cosmetic purposes are exceedingly smaller than the doses that would cause systemic problems, such as Botulism. There has never been a reported case of systemic problems with Botox. In fact, Botox received its FDA approval specifically for cosmetic purposes in 2002 because the extensive clinical studies showed that it was first and foremost, safe, and that it was extremely effective. Botox is the most important thing to remember about Botox is that it is a toxin, so it must be injected by an experienced and properly trained practitioner. The injections are virtually painless and leaves minimally bruising or swelling.

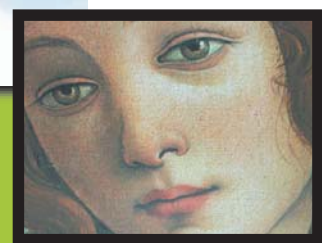
**IT APPEARS THAT BLEPHAROPLASTY IS A PRETTY POPULAR PROCEDURE. WHAT IS IT EXACTLY AND CAN YOU GIVE US MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE?**

The saying, "The eyes are the window to the soul," turns out to have a lot of merit. When people are scanning your face, and making interpretation of your physical appearance, they concentrate on your eyes. As a result, when your eyes looked heavy, tired, or have prominent bags, the whole face looks aged. Blepharoplasty is a procedure that addresses these concerns and really rejuvenates the face. It removes the excess skin and/or bulging fat from the upper and lower eyelids and does it in a fashion that make the whole face glow. It does not look surgical, the patient simply takes on a refreshed and more youthful appearance. As it turns out, Blepharoplasty is a simple outpatient procedure that can easily be performed in the office. Depending on the degree of correction required, the recovery can be anywhere from just a couple of days (like the weekend) to about a week. The procedure has minimal pain and the recovery is quite easy. ■



*Introducing ThreadLift* A new way to lift and reposition sagging tissue and skin to a more youthful position.

- No-incisions
- In-Office Procedure
- Minimal Recovery
- Non -Surgical & Natural Appearance
- Works for Brows, Face, & Neck
- FDA approved
- As seen on Oprah, Today Show, etc.



*Dr. Ramirez is the only certified & trained Surgeon to perform the ThreadLift in Monterey County.*

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