



## Ask Dr. Zimpler

### Finding Your Fountain Of Youth

**Q** I am a 48-year-old woman and, I'm increasingly troubled by the sagginess in my cheeks and the deep lines that run between my nose and the corners of my mouth. What procedure or procedures would best address my issues? Could they be solved by Botox injections?

**A** What you're describing is a complaint I have heard often from women around your age. It sounds like you have lost some of the elasticity in your cheeks, which has caused them to "sag" as you say. It has also led to lowering of the cheek fat pad, loose facial skin, jowls, and intensified the lines around the corners of your mouth. Frequent smiling, which I certainly encourage, exacerbates this and can deepen such "laugh lines."



As with most cosmetic concerns, yours can be addressed in a number of ways. While Botox, a muscle-paralyzing agent, works incredibly well in the upper face to eliminate forehead wrinkles and crows feet, it is not used for the areas you are concerned about. A filling material, such as Restylane or Juvederm, will help smooth out the folds around the nose and mouth, but will not change the jowls, facial skin laxity, or re-contour your jaw line. It sounds like you are a good candidate for a mid-facelift or "mini-facelift". Although, the lift is a more complex procedure than injections, I think you will ultimately be happier with the results than with injections alone.

A mid-facelift is a fairly straightforward procedure in which the fatty tissue layers are repositioned and easily lifted while the skin is simultaneously tightened. It involves a few small inconspicuous incisions placed around the ear and hairline. This procedure will last considerably longer if it's done at the peak time, which it sounds like you're currently in. If you go down the injections road now, and put off the lift, you are increasing your risk for a less successful lift outcome in the future. In addition, you'd be spending money on injections-which can really add up over the course of years-that will only address part of your concerns and, in all likelihood, you will not be fully satisfied with the results. A mid-facial lift, on the other hand, will eliminate the

lines and restore the fullness to your cheekbones bringing about an overall more youthful appearance.

**Q** My face seems to be the only part of me that is not aging well. At 53, I am still in good physical shape, but I notice new lines and wrinkles on my face each day, particularly on my cheeks and forehead and around my lips. My friend had a facelift, which did wonders for her appearance. I am thinking about getting one too, but my face is thin and I am not sure there's very much to lift. Does it sound like I would benefit from a facelift?

**A** Despite the dramatic changes that can be brought about by a facelift, it is not a panacea, nor is it the right solution for all facial problems. From your description, it doesn't sound like your face has fallen or lost much of its firmness and that's good news. You would probably be a good candidate for a non-surgical solution, such as a laser resurfacing or a chemical peel. Laser resurfacing uses light energy to eliminate fine lines and wrinkles, and also get rid of unwanted pigmentation, such as "age spots." The procedure removes the outer layers of damaged skin, allowing newer, smoother skin to appear in its place. The latest in skin tightening and resurfacing is the Fraxel system, which has proven long lasting results with minimal downtime and recovery

Another great option would be a chemical peel, in which one or more chemical solutions is applied to the face, followed by a peeling agent, resulting in the removal of lines and wrinkles, as well as more even color. Chemical peels come in varying strengths and can be done in the office during lunchtime.

Furthermore, both lasers and chemical peels could be combined with Botox injections for forehead wrinkles and crow's feet. By adding more than one treatment modality improvement can become exponential. Based on the concerns you've raised, I think either or both of these treatments would be appropriate. Remember, not everyone needs a facelift-just because it worked for your friend, doesn't mean it will work for you.

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