

Looking and Feeling Your Best

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Pre-Fraxel



Post-Fraxel

Fraxel Laser, a Health Magazine “Breakthrough of the Year”

The Fraxel laser is considered the most significant advancement in skin rejuvenation since the advent of laser resurfacing in the mid-1990s. Fraxel laser treatments greatly improve the appearance of sun-damaged or aging skin yet avoid significant post-treatment inconvenience for the patient. The advantages of Fraxel laser treatment are so substantial that the Fraxel laser was named as one of 10 “Breakthroughs of the Year 2006” in women’s health by Health magazine. Laser resurfacing is effective because with this treatment sun-damaged skin is actually removed by the laser; with healing, new skin replaces the superficial skin layers where most sun damage occurs.

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Fraxel Laser . . .

In “traditional” laser resurfacing superficial skin layers are removed from 100% of the treated skin area, and the post-operative recovery can be quite prolonged. The natural barrier function of the epidermis (the topmost skin layer) is lost because this layer has been completely removed.

Until this layer grows back, the skin must be protected until healing is complete (in one to two weeks). Thus, the “down time” is significant after traditional laser resurfacing.

Although laser resurfacing is very effective in smoothing wrinkles and removing sun damage, it also carries the risk of lightening the skin tone (hypopigmentation) which may be permanent.

A Fractional Approach

The Fraxel laser was developed as a safer alternative to traditional laser resurfacing and provides significant improvement in skin aging with minimal “down time” after the treatment. Fraxel laser treatment is “fractional” in that only about 20% of the skin surface is affected during a typical treatment. Tiny, microscopic spots of laser energy (usually about one million with a full-

face treatment) are evenly distributed and are surrounded by untreated skin. Because the treated spots are so tiny, the epidermis remains intact at all times and the only effect of the treatment is mild redness and swelling for two to three days.

Because the tiny spots of treated skin are replaced with new skin,

“Significantly improves skin aging with minimal down time”

this fractional treatment will achieve much of the improvement of traditional laser resurfacing after a series of Fraxel treatments (five full-face Fraxel treatments will treat essentially 100% of the face). Age spots will be largely removed because they are replaced with new epidermis. The tiny spots of Fraxel laser energy penetrate deep enough into the dermis (the deeper layer of skin) to stimulate significant production of new collagen; this new collagen results in smoothing of wrinkles around the eyes (“crows feet”) and the cheeks. When your skin produces its own collagen, the results are long lasting because endogenous collagen persists for years.

Greater Safety

Because the recovery phase after Fraxel is so gentle, the treatments are extremely safe; the risk of hypopigmentation is near zero. The Fraxel is so

safe that treatment can be done virtually anywhere on the body and can improve sun damage on the neck, chest and even hands! Fraxel can also improve stretch marks on the abdomen and thighs.

Dr. Langdon has used the Fraxel laser since November 2005 and is one of the most experienced Fraxel physicians in the United States. In fact, Dr. Langdon is one of the first physicians anywhere to acquire the second-generation enhanced Fraxel system, the SR 1500. The advantages of the newest Fraxel laser (compared to the original) include greater efficacy, no need for the use of blue tracking dye on the skin, and significantly higher energy treatments with less sensitivity of the skin. Many of our patients have had treatments with both the “old” and the “new” Fraxel and all report that treatments with the newest laser are significantly less painful and are very easily tolerated.

Choose the Best Fraxel

Patients should be aware that the newer higher power Fraxel laser (the SR 1500) is only available to Dermatologists and Plastic Surgeons. “Medical spas” or “aesthetic centers” that are not affiliated with such specialist physicians are limited to a lower power and less effective version of the Fraxel laser.

Safe UV Exposure and Vitamin D Supplements

Recent reports in the media have raised the issue of whether using a sunscreen, which blocks exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light, may actually be dangerous to overall health. This is because the skin naturally produces vitamin D when exposed to UV light. Adequate blood levels of vitamin D provide protection against bone loss, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis, autoimmune diseases, and even many forms of cancer.

In particular, reports in the media have warned that people in northern regions, such as the Northeastern U.S. and northern Europe, are particularly vulnerable to decreased vitamin D levels, because of limited exposure to sunlight in these areas, especially during the winter months. Some “experts” have even recommended not using sunscreen in order to facilitate exposure to UV and thus increase levels of vitamin D production. How can one attain adequate levels of vitamin D and still have safe exposure to UV sunlight, which is well established as a cause of skin cancer? The answer is to take not only a multivitamin but also an additional vitamin D supplement (in the form of Vitamin D3), which will help provide adequate levels of this vitamin, and to continue using sunscreen to prevent skin aging and skin cancer.

For many years, the recommended daily amount (RDA) of vitamin D was 200 IU for all individuals under the age of 50, 400 IU for all individuals from 50-70 years old, and 600 IU for those who are over the age of 70. Today, public health experts are recommending a daily amount of at least 800 IU of vitamin D3, the amount present in eight cups of milk or two multivitamins.



Preventing Disease

Vitamin D has always been known to play a role in the absorption of calcium, thus ensuring growth of strong bones; especially important to postmenopausal women is maintaining bone strength as estrogen levels decrease after menopause. More recent studies have shown that consuming as much as 1500 IU of vitamin D3 daily is effective in preventing many types of cancer and other diseases. Nutrition specialists caution, however, that adults not exceed a daily amount of 2000 IU to avoid side effects from consuming too much vitamin D.

UV Protection

Adequate sun protection includes minimizing outdoor activities between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when UV exposure is at its greatest and applying thirty minutes before exposure a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 and reapplying it every two hours. Also, wearing sun-protective clothing and a hat will provide protection against harmful sunrays. Protecting one's skin from UV exposure not only decreases the risk of skin cancer but also prevents aging of the skin, which is manifested by age spots, dilated blood vessels, and wrinkles.

Taking vitamin D supplements (a minimum daily amount of 800 IU or as high as 1500 IU of vitamin D3), along with practicing safe exposure to sunlight, can help one attain adequate levels of vitamin D, especially during the winter months, without increasing the risk of skin cancer.

Which “Filler” to Use: Restylane, Radiesse or Sculptra?

Several injectable “fillers” have recently been approved in the United States, each having a special use in diminishing wrinkles and furrows. Since its FDA approval in December 2003, Restylane has become the most popular wrinkle-filling injectable treatment in the United States. Restylane is used mainly for superficial wrinkles and has almost entirely replaced older collagen treatments. Unlike bovine collagen (obtained from cows), Restylane is a pure natural substance called hyaluronic acid. It is not derived from animals and is produced in a laboratory environment. Restylane is identical to human hyaluronic acid, so no allergy testing is required (as it is prior to the use of bovine collagen). Restylane is clear and is thus generally not visible after it is used to smooth superficial skin wrinkles. The improvement in wrinkles after Restylane injection can last a year or more. Recent studies have even shown that Restylane stimulates natural collagen production in the skin, an effect that can be long-lasting.

Juvederm, another filler composed of hyaluronic acid, is very similar to Restylane and is used in the same way.

The Paris Lip: Subtle Augmentation for Aging Lips

One common problem that women notice with aging is progressive thinning of the lips. Thinner lips can form wrinkles that extend to the skin above the lip; these wrinkles can allow lipstick to spread from the lip onto the skin. Restylane is an excellent material to use for adding volume to the lips. As when used for wrinkles, Restylane injection provides immediate improvement in lip volume without the need for surgery. People’s opinions about how much lip volume is desirable vary widely; many people are reluctant to undergo lip augmentation because they fear that their lips will look like Angelina Jolie’s! In reality, lip augmentation can be done in a subtle way, and, if desired, the fullness can be subsequently increased with additional treatment.

The mildest form of lip augmentation is the “Paris Lip” (a technique first developed by a French physician). Youthful lips have a slightly elevated ridge along the line where the lip and skin meet. (The photo is of a woman in her 20s who has not had any lip augmentation at all. The Paris Lip injection simply re-creates the slight ridge that she naturally has). Restoring this ridge with the Paris lip technique makes the lip slightly wider and also decreases the tendency for lipstick to “bleed” off the lip. Patients who decide that they would like further lip volume augmentation can (at a later time) have additional Restylane added to the body of the lip.



These are the naturally beautiful lips of a 23-year old woman who has never received treatment. Note the fullness of the lips and the slight “ridge” at the lip border (“Paris Lip”).

Deeper Fillers

Two additional injectable “fillers” that have more recently gained FDA approval in the United States are Radiesse and Sculptra.

Radiesse is best used for deeper furrows, such as the fold that runs from the lower nose toward the corner of the mouth.

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New and Noteworthy

Which “Filler” to Use . . .

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Radiesse can also be used to augment volume over cheek bones and along the jaw line and to fill in hollow areas of the cheek. Like Restylane, Radiesse is a natural substance (calcium hydroxylapatite) and is identical to the mineral content of human bone. Thus, no allergy testing is needed. Radiesse is also produced in a laboratory environment and is thus not derived from animals. The biggest advantage of Radiesse is its longevity; improvement may persist for up to three years.

Another new injectable is Sculptra, a polymerized form of lactic acid (a product of sugarcane). Lactic acid polymers have been used for many years to produce absorbable surgical sutures (stitches), which gradually dissolve. Sculptra is a suspension of small particles of the material; when injected just beneath the skin, Sculptra stimulates production of collagen as it dissolves, adding extra volume to the cheek. Sculptra is usually given in a series of two or three treatments, each spaced several weeks apart. The volume augmentation can take two or more months to be fully evident. The treatment effects are more than additive in that the second and especially the third treatment sessions result in more volume augmentation than the first.

Choosing a Filler

Each of these three new filler materials has an optimal application. Restylane is ideal for filling in superficial-to-moderate wrinkles. Radiesse is well suited for filling in deeper furrows and can be used to add volume to hollow areas of the face. Radiesse can also add volume to the cheek bone, chin and jaw line areas. Sculptra works at an even deeper level and can be used as a non-surgical alternative to augmentation using the patient's own fat tissue (lipo-augmentation). Dr. Langdon has extensive experience with all three fillers and can discuss with you how they can be used non-surgically to improve facial wrinkles and furrows.

Dr. Langdon Writes Eight Chapters for Surgical Textbooks

Dr. Langdon has an international reputation as a cosmetic dermasurgeon and is recognized as an expert by his peers. Each year he is invited to meetings of surgical societies in the U.S. and abroad to deliver lectures and to teach courses. In 2007, he taught courses on liposuction (in Chicago), face-lifting and blepharoplasty (both in Venice, Italy). Dr. Langdon is often asked to share his expertise by contributing chapters to advanced textbooks on cosmetic surgery.



Books with chapters written by Dr. Langdon

In the past two years Dr. Langdon has been the sole author of five textbook chapters and co-author of three additional chapters. Three of his chapters are on face-lifting techniques, three are on the brow/forehead lift, one is on blepharoplasty (eyelid lift) and one is on liposuction. One chapter describes the aging process in the face. Five of Dr. Langdon's contributions are in volumes published by Elsevier, the world's largest publisher of medical books.

SkinTyte Tightens Skin without Surgery

Dr. Langdon is pleased to introduce our newest aesthetic light-based treatment, the Sciton SkinTyte. The SkinTyte is a broadband light source that produces infrared (invisible) light, which gently heats the skin enough to cause immediate contraction. The skin surface is simultaneously cooled to provide comfort. The majority of patients feel that their skin is tighter after just one treatment, but further visible improvements in skin laxity generally take place over three to six months. Typical treatment areas include the face, neck and abdomen.

SkinTyte is both more effective and more comfortable than older skin tightening treatments such as Titan and Thermage. This exciting new technology is perfect for those who wish to tighten and firm up their skin, with virtually no down-time.

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New and Noteworthy

To Learn More . . .

Seminars

Dr. Langdon conducts a monthly seminar in our office, generally on the third Thursday of each month. At our free seminar you will learn about the latest less-invasive procedures that can give you remarkable improvement while avoiding the risks and prolonged recovery time of traditional surgery. To RSVP for the next seminar, please call our office (203-453-8625). Also, see below about accessing the seminar online!

Online

Our web site (www.cosmeticlaser.com) is a great resource to learn more about the aging process and how our procedures can improve your appearance. You can download previous editions of our newsletter, view an online version of our latest seminar and join our email list to receive updates and special offers on our treatments and procedures.

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