



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO AESTHETIC MEDECINE

PLASTIC SURGEON
Dr Mario F. Bernier
C.S.P.Q., F.R.C.S.(c), F.A.C.S.

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, looking upwards and to the right. Her skin is smooth and glowing. Two hands wearing white latex gloves are gently touching her face: one hand is on her forehead, and the other is on her cheek. The background is a soft, neutral tone.

AESTHETIC MEDECINE

Medical aesthetics has grown in popularity over the last 15 years, not only for doctors who have access to modern, highly efficient tools, capable of erasing signs of aging, but also for patients who wish to rejuvenate their appearance without invasive surgery. Plastic and aesthetic surgery association studies clearly show that facial surgery such as forehead liftings are on the decrease across North America.

Scores of options are available to rejuvenate your look and many patients do not know where or how to get the best return on their investment. I have prepared this guide, hoping it will help you make the best choices; since nothing reassures more than advice coming from an experienced plastic surgeon with over 25 years of practise in the field of aesthetics and rejuvenation. Bear in mind that this guide is not a substitute for a clinical consultation or for a physical examination performed by a qualified physician, you will nonetheless gather many fundamentals before taking your first steps to rejuvenation.



AGING – SOLAR DAMAGES **TO THE SKIN**

Skin aging process is the result of a combination of two main factors, the first, is biological (genetics), and the other is environmental (sun, hormones, life style, etc.). Biologically aged skin appears as we get older, caused by a loss of elasticity, and results in sagging skin, lines and wrinkles, reduction of fat (volume loss) lower production of collagen and elastic fibers. Excessive sun exposure will bring about the same aging effects as the biological process, but in addition, the damage caused by solar effect, generates the deterioration of the epidermis (superficial layer of skin), the dermis (deeper layer), pigmentation can become uneven and develop pigmented spots (brown spots) or skin cancer (melanoma). Damage to the dermis increases its thickness and disorganizes collagen elastic fibers (elastosis).

These skin type conditions must be treated differently, and for this reason, in aesthetic medicine a combination of personalized treatments is offered to enhance your overall appearance.

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT PROFESSIONAL FOR MY MEDICAL AESTHETIC CARE?

To begin with, a plastic surgeon holds a college education degree in medicine obtained from a medical faculty at a university and is formed to evaluate your facial aesthetic condition, he can recommend the best treatment options, be it surgery or simply less invasive treatments that are now available. In fact, aesthetic treatments can be offered in many businesses such as: beauty salons, hair dressers, aestheticians etc., but for your own peace of mind, consulting a skin care professional such as a plastic surgeon, a dermatologist or even your family physician whose main activity is aesthetics is highly recommended.

In my opinion, to reduce risk of necrosis, partial loss of eyesight, aesthetic deformation or deceiving results, it is much safer to obtain facial rejuvenation injections that are administered by a qualified professional with the appropriate expertise.



FACELIFT

OR AESTHETIC MEDECINE?

I'm trained plastic surgeon, who has obtained an additional certification (Fellow) in aesthetics, and was tutored by the world-renowned expert in Facelift surgery, Dr Bruce Connell in California.

It is **wrong to believe** that a facelift is a permanent solution, because the aging process will of course continue normally. Therefore, I strongly recommend that my patients refer to medical aesthetic treatments to insure lasting, long-term results.

Facelift surgery consists in repositioning skin tissue, fat and SMAS. Ideal patients for this type of operation are: in their fifties, NON-SMOKERS, have excess facial and neck skin that has suffered little solar damages. Since this surgery does not improve the quality of the skin, a few additional aesthetic medical treatments can be recommended.

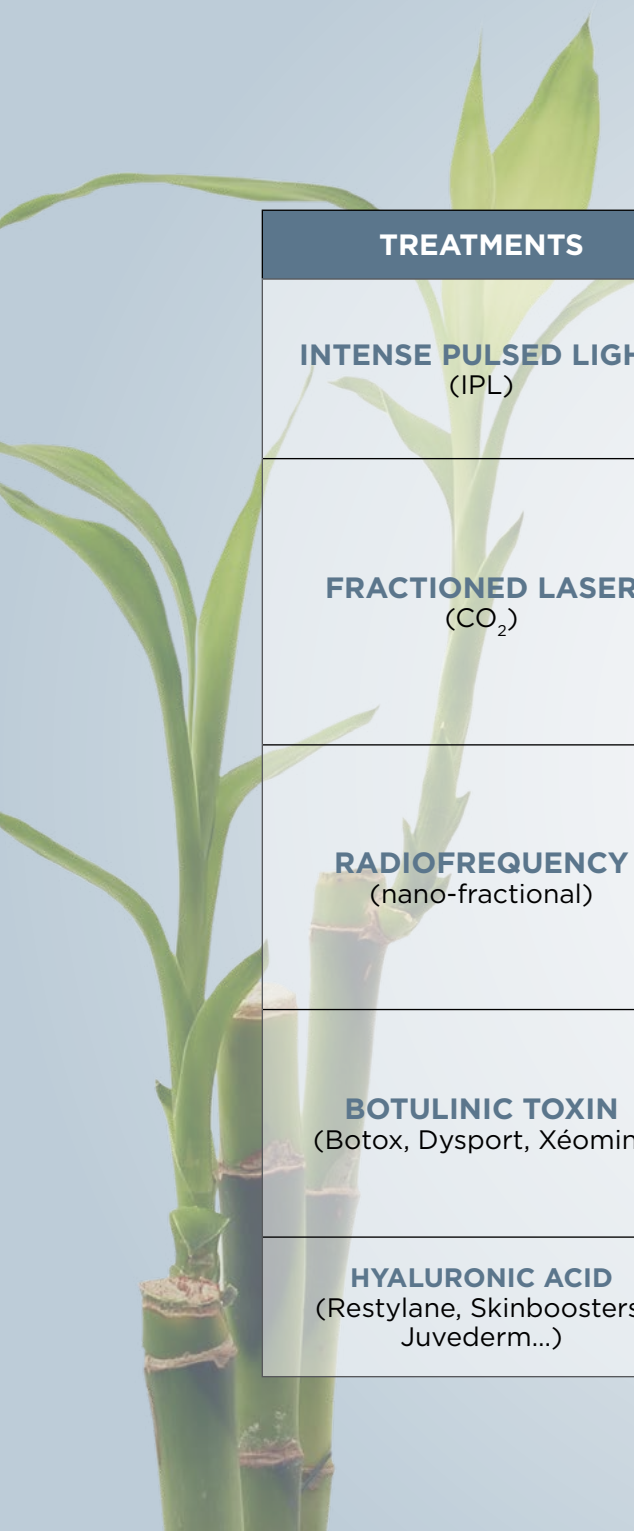
Patients showing deep wrinkles and lines, blotches but nonetheless have adequate tissue positioning, will be ideal candidates for non-invasive, non-surgical alternatives. Pulsating light treatment (IPL), fractional (CO₂) laser, or injections that can rejuvenate the general facial aspect.



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS TO REJUVENATE SKIN WITHOUT SURGERY?

My first recommendation is to consult a competent medical aesthetic physician. A physical examination will allow to determine the damages to your skin due to the aging process, solar exposure (thickness of the skin, rosacea, pigmentary blotches, lines and wrinkles and skin slackness). In my case, I combine state-of-the-art technology and my skills, to optimize the precise and personalized treatment plan for each patient.





TREATMENTS	WHAT CONDITION?	NUMBER OF TREATMENTS?	CONVALESCENCE?
INTENSE PULSED LIGHT (IPL)	Pigmentary stains (brown spots) hyperpigmentation, redness, distended blood vessels unify tint.	By using the most efficient device in the industry, usually only one treatment is required.	Rougeurs 24 à 48 hres, nous pouvons nous maquiller dès le lendemain.
FRACTIONED LASER (CO ₂)	To Improve skin texture, tighten the skin, large pores, smooth out lines and wrinkles, and reduce appearance of acne scars, **can only be used on skin types I, II and III.	Many patients see a significant difference after only one treatment, however a 2 to 4 treatment protocol is suggested. I prefer milder treatment parameters (micro-laser-peel) which reduces the patient convalescence time to 48 hours.	Redness 24 to 48 hours. Application of a restorative cream barrier is essential during the first 48 hours. Return to normal routine on the 3rd day.
RADIOFREQUENCY (nano-fractional)	To Improve skin texture, tighten the skin, large pores, smooth out lines and wrinkles, and reduce appearance of acne scars, **can be performed on all skin types I, II III, IV and V.	A 2 to 4 treatment protocol is generally suggested.	Nothing can be applied to the skin for 48 hours.
BOTULINIC TOXIN (Botox, Dysport, Xéomin)	Neutralize expression muscles on the forehead, the glabellar lines, crow's feet. Reposition the tissues of the upper and middle 1/3 of the face. Corrects the gingival smile and enhances the lips (lip lift).	We recommend one treatment every 6 months. Eventually patients come back only once each year.	Refrain from sporting activity for 48 hours and do not use make-up on the day of injection.
HYALURONIC ACID (Restylane, Skinboosters, Juvederm...)	Fills deep wrinkles, increase skin volume and smooths skin.	Effects of these products can last from 8 to 12 months.	Do not wear make-up the day of injection, refrain from alcohol and aspirin for 48 hours prior to injections.

HOW LONG DO THE TREATMENTS LAST AND WHAT HAPPENS IF I GIVE UP?

Nothing exists at this time that stops the natural aging process, the physician must re-assess patients every year. Based on normal biological aging factors and damage caused by the sun, the number of corrective IPL or **CO₂** Laser treatments maintaining initial results will differ from one patient to another.

Botulinic toxin (Botox, Dysport, Xéomin) liberates an agent that acts like a neuromodulator that paralyses the facial expression muscles. The effect lasts approximately 5 to 6 months, with a gradual return to initial mobility. Repeated injections of botulinic toxin every 6 months over a period of approximately 3 years usually prolongs the effect to up to 8 - 12 months. **As for hyaluronic acid, (HA) also known as filling agent** (Restylane, Restylane Skinboosters, Restylane LYFT, Juvéderm, Voluma, Bolotero...), the effect is temporary, but the lasting effect will differ from one injection area to another. For example, an injection to the lips may last up to 8 months whereas an injection of the same product to the **nasolabial folds** wrinkles may be effective for 18 months, or again puppet lines may disappear for up to one full year. Generally, this type of injection, regardless of the supplier, lasts between

It is possible to
obtain a natural looking
result without the waxed
look when choosing treatment
by injection. Dr. Bernier always
recommends the appropriate
dosage and respects facial
proportions thus insuring
a painless and subtle
rejuvenation treatment.



6 and 18 months. It can be noted that although these products are designed to be temporary, with time, the effect never disappears completely. Hyaluronic acid stimulates production of collagen, and the needle itself produces a scar tissue at the injection point increasing tissue volume that was inexistent prior to the procedure. Repeated injections of hyaluronic acid have a cumulative effect thus fewer injections will eventually be required. Proof has also been established by scientific studies that patients using hyaluronic acid injections will experience a slower aging process.

Should you, one day, interrupt all rejuvenation process treatments, you will at least have delayed your natural aging process and simply continue to age naturally.



WHICH IS THE BEST SEASON **FOR TREATMENT?**

Rejuvenation by injecting botulinic toxin or by hyaluronic acid can be performed at any time of the year without climate related consequences.

As for IPL treatment, CO₂ and fractional radiofrequency, direct exposure to the sun rays is counter-indicated, patients should favor spring, winter or even autumn. Of course, it is possible to get treatment during the summer months if the patient applies these precautions: no exposure to direct sun rays, wearing protective clothing, a hat, sun glasses and of course sun screen at all times, this will help prevent complications. The same applies to patients travelling south during treatment. Patients may even need to temporarily interrupt use of certain products and medication during this period.

SHOULD I SHOP FOR BARGAINS?



The appropriate question to ask should be:

Why do prices vary?

There are several reasons that can justify the price spread.

The most important factor is to validate the professional's expertise. Many clinics will delegate the injection portion to a nurse and therefore perform a higher volume of treatments. In those clinics, lowering the price is a way of attracting patients. When injections are performed by a specialized physician, you benefit from his expertise along with the perfect product and dosage designed for your condition. When I perform the injections on my patients, the entire process is done in a safe and sterile environment to prevent complications and of course this does impact the cost.

The products used for your treatment will also be part of the equation... Prices may differ from one supplier to another even for similar quantities. If ridiculously low prices are quoted you may be getting products that have expired, offers that seem too good to be true are often **simply too good to be true**. Have the products reached their shelf-life, are they counterfeit (yes, they do exist). Are these products approved by Health Canada? Please! Do the math! We often see patients who have no idea of what product was injected into their body previously, and in those cases refusing the injection would likely have been the right thing to do. Some products are not compatible for everyone. I highly recommend that all my patients document all previous injections administered in the past, this can be useful when choosing a different medico-aesthetic clinic or practitioner for your next injections.

Price-shopping for botulinic toxin (Botox, Dysport, Xéomin), is never a good idea... Did you know that these products are powder based and need to be diluted in saline physiological sterile solution before being injected? If the person preparing the solution increases the dilution required to cut his cost, the lasting effect will likely be reduced and not last 5 to 6 months. Therefore, shopping for Botox bargain prices may not give you the lasting results expected. Furthermore, the prices advertised for the Botox by units do not include the cost of the professional services of the physician.