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THE AGING FACE:

Why Botox and fillers are such useful
tools in the Art of Facial Plastic Surgery



My how things
have changed

My how things have changed. We used to blame gravity for all our facial woes that come with aging. In recent years, though, medical science has taught us new realities about our face and the aging process. New advancements in medical technology have produced many new treatment options and products to help improve our facial appearance.

That's a big deal, because we're living longer, and we're healthier. We want to look as great on the outside as we feel on the inside. More women – and men – than ever before are consulting with plastic or cosmetic surgeons and aesthetic technicians to give their aging face a new kind of “lift.” Younger adults want to defy the effects of aging before they take hold.

With what we now know and the latest procedures and products at hand, facial plastic surgeons have an ever-widening spectrum of options to help each patient devise a tailored aesthetic improvement program. Botox and dermal fillers in particular have become great tools for facial plastic surgeons, combining with the surgeon's artistic skill of placement to produce some exciting results that we here at Raval Facial Aesthetics want to share with you in this e-book.



WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR FACE?

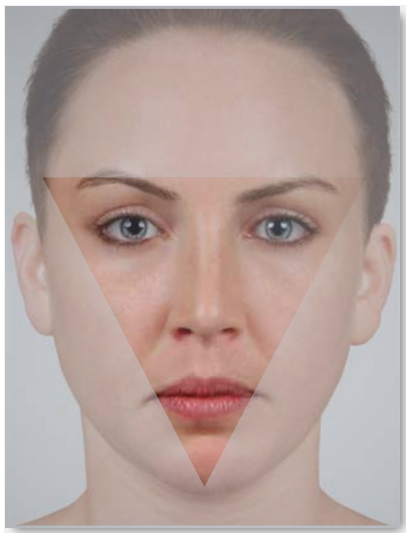
The old way of thinking was that gravity pulls soft tissue and skin down. This is partially true. Now, we know that the aging face also has less fat, so cheeks appear flatter, and bones also get thinner with time. These are structural changes not caused by gravity.

It turns out beauty is not only skin deep. How your face looks when you're young and as you age is actually determined by four structural layers – bone, muscles, fat pads and skin. Everyone's facial structure is unique, but in general, a young face is like a triangle. You have high cheekbones, full cheeks and a defined jawline.

Evolving Triangle of Age

DAUGHTER, AGE 26: TRIANGLE OF YOUTH

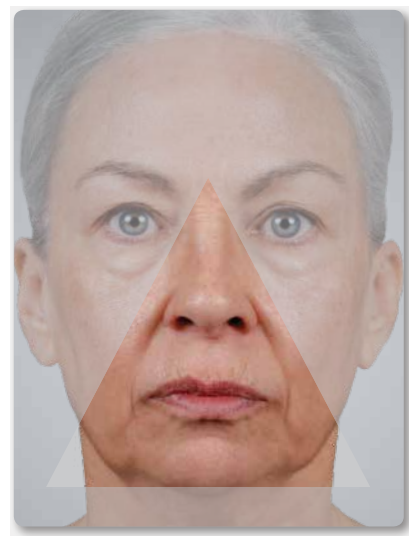
{ Image courtesy of Allergan }



Typical youthful features:
High cheekbones, full cheeks,
and a define jawline.

MOTHER, AGE 64: INVERTED TRIANGLE

{ Image courtesy of Allergan }



Common features of midface aging:
Drooping skin in the cheek area, flattened cheeks,
sagging jawline, fullness between the
neck and chin (double chin).

As you age, the triangle becomes inverted. Your cheeks are flatter, and the skin begins to droop. Your jawline begins to sag, too, and you may develop a double chin. This is caused by added fullness between the neck and chin. What we see on the surface – fine lines and wrinkles, as well as shape changes – is affected by changes in all four facial layers.

Bone

Your facial bone structure serves as the foundation for your appearance. The bone loss associated with aging can change the shape of that foundation, changing the contours of your face.

Muscles

No part of your body is more mobile than your face. You eat, talk and make any number of facial expressions to communicate. It all causes wrinkles as you age, along with fat loss and thinning skin. Muscles in your face also grow weaker as you age. That lack of muscle tone contributes to overall sagging, especially along your jawline.

Fat pads

The rounded contours and look of fullness in your face come from fat pads that reside under your skin. As you get older, those fat pads become thinner and possibly drop lower. Your cheeks appear sunken, and you may see hollows around your eyes. Your nasolabial folds (the lines that run from outer nostrils to the corners of your mouth) deepen. Your jawline sags and accumulating fat between your neck and chin can give you that double chin.

Skin

Young skin is smooth, soft, supple and well-hydrated. Your face looks fresh because it is constantly producing new cells. You may have dynamic wrinkles – the ones you see when you smile, laugh, frown or squint – but they are temporary. As you age, your face loses essential oils so your skin becomes drier. Collagen and elastin production slows, allowing those dynamic wrinkles to become permanent. How, and how fast, your skin ages also depends on factors such as sun exposure, smoking and alcohol use, stress, your diet and, of course, genetics.



develop a
personalized
treatment plan.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

The old way to deal with the aging face was to defy gravity by surgically lifting the brow, neck or entire face. For a while plastic surgeons toyed with the idea of restoring volume by adding fat, but it didn't always last. Adding collagen was expensive, and it lasted only about three months, so it was not practical. Fat injections improved in the early 90s and really caught on in the following decade. But fat particles are large, and that can lead to lumpiness.



[Image courtesy of Allergan]

BESIDES, FAT IS LIVE TISSUE

Besides, fat is live tissue. Transplanting it from one location in the body to another meant that sometimes the fat didn't survive. Uneven survival of the fat grafts lead to an uneven appearance. Also, if the patient lost weight, the fullness could be lost, too. If they gained weight, then the transferred fat may enlarge too. This may lead to an unnaturally full face.

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The advent of fillers

Hyaluronic acid fillers came next. Originally they provided only a short-term fix, too. But scientists continuously improved them to deliver better longer lasting results. Juvederm came on the market in about 2000. It provided even longer-lasting results – a year or more. It was initially used to fill in wrinkles.

However, when we realized that the aging face is losing volume, not simply succumbing to gravity, we had to rethink our approach to treatment. Adding volume to the entire face seemed to be a great option to give a younger look. Products such as Voluma and Restylane Lyft were created to counteract bone and soft tissue volume loss. Enhancing the cheekbones can give the entire face the look of a facelift. That's a very successful outcome.

Now, many doctors use fillers instead of fat injections. The results can be very long-lasting. Voluma, for instance, is FDA-certified to last two years, although my experience is that it lasts much longer. In addition, fillers are far less invasive. Injecting fat is a surgical procedure. It requires anesthesia and a full surgical team. With fillers, the injection process can take as little as 20 minutes in the office, and then you can go home, or even back to work.

There is definitely still a place for face and neck lifts to correct sagging skin. Overall, however, our philosophy is now “a little lift, a little volume.” So when I consult with patients, I take a holistic approach. By learning about your lifestyle, considering your genetics, etc. and understanding your aesthetic goals, I can work with you to develop a personalized treatment plan.

I particularly like Botox and the new dermal fillers. Here's why.

I use Botox (or Dysport, a similar excellent product made by a different company) between the eyebrows and around the eyes to reduce creases from frowning and improve the crow's feet. These treatment last about three months. A recent study showed that combining Botox with a dermal filler around the eyes provides longer-lasting results.

Too much Botox can result in that unnatural "frozen" effect, because it completely paralyzes the muscles. From my experience, I use it very conservatively to reduce muscle movement without sacrificing natural facial expression. Dermal fillers are eventually absorbed by the body, which is why they aren't permanent. The more animated your face, the faster absorption takes place. So using Botox to reduce muscle movement allows the filler to remain longer.

Newer fillers such as Restylane Silk are very thin. That makes them excellent for smoothing fine wrinkles such as those caused by smoking or pursing of the lips.

If your treatment plan requires several syringes of filler, I prefer to do a few at a time – some now, some a month later. That gives you better, smoother and more natural-looking results. However, I do sometimes see patients who live too far away to make multiple trips impractical. So, if they want, I can do the entire treatment at one time, or we can schedule repeat visits farther apart.

There are a few risks associated with dermal fillers. If the injection causes a vascular occlusion, tissue death and loss can occur. However, that is reversible. There are a few other very rare complications, which you should ask about during your consultation.

There is so much we can do now with Botox and fillers today. However, it is also important to remember that Botox and fillers are merely tools; it really takes an experienced injector to place them in the right area and in the right amount to give someone their best look that is also natural looking. That's why I like to call it the "Art of Facial Plastic Surgery." Getting someone looking their best is an art with Botox and Fillers (or surgery and laser if that is what works best for your goals) being the tools I use to get them there. So, what's right for your aging face? That depends on your face and your aesthetic goals. But you have plenty of options. Let's talk.



So what can botox and fillers do for you? Having read this eBook, you know that depends on several factors, most importantly your goals. Whether you have more questions or you're ready to move forward, give us a call.

Jeffrey R. Raval, MD, MBA, FACS is a facial plastic surgeon, board-certified by the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery as well as the American Board of Otolaryngology. He has been practicing the Art of Facial Plastic Surgery since 2001. He is a member of the American Medical Association, Colorado Medical Society, Denver Medical Society, and American Academy of Cosmetic Surgeons. Dr. Raval owns and directs Rocky Mountain Laser Aesthetics. Dr. Raval is also a national trainer for physicians and nurses interested in learning the best practices for filler and botulinum toxin injections (Allergan and Galderma products).

What can botox and fillers do for you?

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