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This cutting edge, instant healing face lift heralds a new era in anti-ageing dermatology

Meet the brand new holy-grail skin lifting and tightening cosmetic procedure transforming faces without a trace

By Sarah Kennedy NEW YORK
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The latest innovation in face lift surgery claims to lift and tighten facial skin without the associated risks of ultrasound or lasers | CREDIT: Jacob Lund / Getty Images

Stepping into the sparkling silvery-white environs of a prestige dermatologist's clinic often feels other-worldly. I find it comforting to check the New York City skyline is still outside the window and we're not just hurtling silently through space during appointments with my dermatologist here in the U.S.

In the futuristic world of aesthetic dermatology, things are so cutting edge it would be no surprise to learn that latest treatment could have come straight off the hospital deck of a futuristic space craft. Prepare to be micro-cored.

Micro-coring is a brand new skin lifting and tightening method conceived by dermatologists and plastic surgeons at Massachusetts General Hospital, in conjunction with medical machine manufacturers Cytrelis. The 'Facelift by thousands of micro-punch excisions' was just revealed at an industry convention by Dr Mathew Avram, Director of the MGH Dermatology, Laser and Cosmetic Centre.

Rather than cutting and pulling up the skin to lift it across the facial structure, micro-coring conducts thousands of tiny tissue removals via a hand-held coring device. Within each tiny core, either five, eight or 10 per cent of the flesh is excised. The walls of the cored hole, which reaches down to the fat layer below the dermis, immediately close up leaving no scars. The result is a tighter, smoother surface as excess skin beneath the surface has been virtually vaporised.

"Except that no heat or energy is used," says Dr Avram. "It's almost like a cookie cutter. In dermatology you use something called a punch biopsy to extract skin for analysis, so this is similar but the coring needle is very small."

Lifting and tightening facial skin without the risk of the burns, uneven texture and bruising that ultrasound or lasers can leave behind, or the need for full surgery is the holy grail for doctors in the aesthetic industry.

Although micro-coring is still awaiting approval from the FDA, early signs are good for a procedure requiring no downtime or general anesthetic. At the moment, a patient seeking a full lower face lift would be looking at around three or four hours under general anesthetic. Due to its pending approval there is as of yet no cost associated with micro-coring, however it would be safe to presume, given it's high tech nature, that it will enter the market as one of the more costly treatments.



Micro-coring is said to be like a face lift but with no recovery time | CREDIT: Puspheimages

Though the results of micro-coring would not be as dramatic as surgery, Dr Avram

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and his Massachusetts team are optimistic about what they have seen so far. "You use injectable anesthesia so the patient is awake," says Avram. "It would probably take 40 minutes to do a full face. So far studies have only been done on the cheeks and tests are still underway. But the procedure significantly tightens the surface and lifts wrinkles by reducing the amount of skin."

Alongside micro-coring, more flight-deck worthy breakthroughs are coming. The Visia machine, which started out as a skin x-ray camera built to reveal sun spots and damage back in the early 1990s, has evolved into a smart system able to read skin inside and out. Now, it is possible for a doctor with this machinery to actually show you what you will look like post-treatment - before it happens.

"The Visia is invaluable for illustrating skin and body treatment outcomes to my patients," explains Dr Munir Somji BSc, MBBS, Chief Medical Officer of Dr MediSpa in London, of the machine's 3D imaging possibilities.

"We use skin analysis to illustrate the benefit of both topical and injectable skin treatments plus wrinkle length and depth. We can also explore sun damage, bacteria based skin conditions, inflammation and pigmentation."


Dr Somji is awaiting delivery of a Visia's new 3D imaging system for the body. "The new technology will help my body patients visualize our surgical and non-surgical treatment outcomes," he says.

Also on the horizon is the S3 Inject, a smart needle breath-through tool for tweakments. The S3 inject has a sensory tip to indicate the presence of arteries, fat or muscle to the injecting physician. Onboard electronics include warning lights and bluetooth to report on each procedure step-by-step.

Such technology will fulfil two main functions: enhanced safety and greater precision. In particular, blindness caused by filler being accidentally injected into the optical nerve during eye-hollow work poses a huge risk for doctors, as does paralysis of vocal or swallowing mechanisms if a neuromodulator hits the wrong spot in the jaw or neck. Bleeding and excessive bruising are also side effects of needles not quite hitting the right spot.

Many doctors currently aspirate first, meaning they inject an exploratory needle along their preferred route for skin treatments or threads to check for hazards before injecting product. The S3 is said to cut down on both time and danger. However, even this seemingly failsafe device should only be trusted in the hands of medically trained experts. Science or no science, the success of all of these treatments still depends on the human hands at work.

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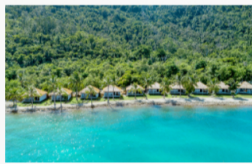


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