

## **Restylane: The Recently Approved Wrinkle Reducer** **By Lorayne B. Weizenecker**

If that twinkle *in* your eye now comes with a wrinkle *between* your eyes, it may be time to launch a counterattack. Dermatologists are working continually to develop effective wrinkle-diminishing treatments with little or no down time. In this ongoing battle against wrinkles, they have just added a new weapon to their arsenal – a recently approved filling agent called Restylane.

According to Leslie Gray, M.D., of Dermatology Center of Atlanta, Restylane works similarly to collagen injections, plumping up the facial wrinkle or line, but it offers some distinct advantages over collagen. “Restylane has the advantage of lasting up to twice as long as collagen,” Gray explains. “And it is synthetically produced and requires no skin testing for allergic reactions, so treatments can begin without waiting.”

Although the FDA only recently approved Restylane, it has a long safety profile in Europe where it has been used since 1996. Derived from hyaluronic acid, a gel-like substance found throughout the body that lubricates the joints and helps retain moisture and elasticity in the skin, the crystal clear gel is injected into the skin in tiny amounts with a very fine needle, lifting and smoothing the wrinkle. Results are immediate.

A former collagen patient of Gray’s recently made the switch to Restylane with satisfying results: “I was happy with the collagen, but it just didn’t last long. To me it was barely worth the pain you go through. I saw the Restylane on a news feature show. People were flying down to Jamaica to have it done. Dr. Gray and I discussed it, and she offered me the opportunity as soon as it was approved.”

The 43-year-old patient says there was slightly more discomfort with the Restylane injections because the product doesn’t have an anesthetic incorporated into it like collagen does. “But no worse than going to the dentist,” she adds. “The immediate results are better, smoother, and I expect this to last six months or a year. It’s well worth it. And Dr. Gray is really good; she doesn’t overdue it. I’ve referred five of my friends to her.”

Gray says that the most popular non-surgical treatment for wrinkles is still Botox. Unlike collagen and Restylane, Botox does not fill wrinkles. “It works by temporarily relaxing the affected muscles that cause the lines,” Gray says. “The skin overlying the relaxed muscle doesn’t move as much so the lines tend to soften. Also, because the skin is not being creased, existing wrinkles won’t progress as quickly. The effects tend to wear off in three to four months, but with repeated treatments results will often last longer due to the muscle losing its size and strength.”

For deeper wrinkles, particularly on the upper face, doctors sometimes combine Botox treatments with filler. Topical preparations such as retinoids, hydroxy acids and some topical vitamins such as vitamin C also may help combat those lines and wrinkles. Gray recommends combining a good at-home regimen with one of the procedures mentioned above for best results.

Most importantly, Gray recommends preventive measures. “Of course with any of these wrinkle-reducing procedures, good skin care is a must to prevent further damage, especially from the sun,” she says. “At a minimum, a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 should be worn daily and year round.”

*For more information call Dermatology Center of Atlanta at 770-497-0669.*

*Lorayne B. Weizenecker is a frequent local freelance writer.*