

Winner—2005 Golden Triangle

DOCTORS' ORDERS

WITH SKIN FIXES SPROUTING LIKE KUDZU, FOUR LEADING DERMATOLOGISTS GIVE MEGAN DEEM THEIR TAKE ON WHAT WORKS AND WHAT'S WORTHLESS

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MOST REQUESTED	Botox injections. They're great for instant gratification but also have the long-term benefit of reducing wear on the face.	CosmoPlast and Botox injections. As we get older, our bottom lip gets a little shorter so the top lip droops over, causing a sad look. CosmoPlast easily fixes this.	Vbeam pulsed dye laser treatments. They minimize redness and broken blood vessels in the face, usually after three sessions.	Botox injections. You can shape a face or treat sweating or headaches—Botox is the aspirin of the decade.
RIISING STARS	Restylane amazes me. It's easier to mold and gives a more natural appearance than collagen, plus you don't get the bumps you sometimes do with collagen.	Hylaform. It's a hyaluronic acid filler like Restylane, but it mixes better with CosmoPlast, a new, non-bovine-synthesized collagen. I like to combine the two in one syringe and inject them. Collagen gives you structure and hyaluronic acid adds volume, so they're good together.	Infrared lasers such as the Smoothbeam or CoolTouch, to treat acne—particularly very resistant cases. They seem to work by shrinking the sebaceous glands, and you get relatively quick results. They hurt like hell, though.	Now that the hyaluronic acids like Restylane are beginning to get FDA approval, it's going to be a funeral march for all types of collagen. Hyaluronic acids give a more robust fill, last longer, and have a low risk of allergic reaction.
BUYER BEWARE	Microdermabrasion doesn't penetrate deep enough to firm skin or combat acne, and the effects aren't cumulative. Light lunchtime chemical peels, such as ones with alpha or beta hydroxy acids, are superior at treating both problems.	Patients keep asking me about StriVectin, an anti-stretch-mark cream that now has word-of-mouth buzz as an antiager. Unfortunately, there's no published research proving either its antiaging or stretch-mark-reduction benefits. If you want to remove wrinkles, get retinoid or Botox shots.	Cosmeceuticals. There are very few products that actually rejuvenate skin. There's controlled research demonstrating the effectiveness of retinoids, for example, and topical vitamin C, when it's produced properly. However, many other topicals are just a waste of time.	Lasers to get rid of leg veins—the whole concept sends me over the edge. Veins are deep, that's why they don't respond well to lasers. You have to inject leg veins with a saltwater solution if you want to remove them.
RISKY BUSINESS	Coblation—skin resurfacing using radio-frequency waves—seemed like a good way to treat lines but can cause scarring or hyperpigmentation. It's a great example of why not to jump on bandwagons and, instead, to wait for more user experience.	I don't like any permanent fillers, including Radiance, Artecoll, and liquid silicone injections. Your face changes with age, and I've seen these turn lumpy and look fake. If you get a bump, you're stuck with it forever.	It's dangerous to go to non-physicians or even doctors who don't have expertise in cosmetic dermatology for many types of skin treatments. For example, the top 20 skin laser experts in this country are almost all dermatologists—not any other type of doctor.	Thermage, a radio-frequency procedure that lifts the face, has potential, but it's very painful and the results are subtle; plus, we don't know the long-term effects. Wait for the next generation of these machines, once they're proven safe and effective.
COMING ATTRACTIONS	Super-effective anti-aging ingredients for home use. Genistein, a soy extract, is one that's going to be big. There's data to show that it works to stimulate collagen production.	Increasing elastic tissue in skin. When we age, we lose collagen, hyaluronic acid, and elastin. Currently, we can replace the first two with injectables. Researchers are working on ways to replicate the third.	Refinement of the technologies and techniques in nonablative skin rejuvenation. Right now, intense pulsed light has been shown to reduce redness and brown spots, but infrared is better for treating wrinkles.	A slightly longer-lasting Botox, which should arrive in 2005. There's not much else we can do to improve on the way Botox works, so all the research money is going to the filler category, which is jumping.

NEED MATURA (PROP STYLING BY GREGORY MEYER FOR HALLEY RESOURCES)