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Wrinkles

Understanding wrinkles

Normal ageing leads to the formation of skin wrinkles. As the years go by, the elastic fibres that keep the skin taut begin to loosen. This makes the skin sag. Wrinkles are also caused by facial expressions, such as the frown lines that form between eyebrows. How much sagging and how many movement wrinkles you get depend in part upon your heredity.

Most wrinkles, however, are caused by cumulative exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun. There are two types of ultraviolet rays: UltraViolet A and UltraViolet B. UVA is associated with skin tanning, wrinkles and melanoma, a form of skin cancer. UVB is associated with sunburn, basal and squamous cell carcinoma; two other forms of skin cancer.

There are three different types of wrinkles:

- Fine lines occurring throughout the face due to gradual loss of elasticity.
- Expression lines where the muscles of facial expression cause permanent creases.
- Gravity lines as the tissues of the face sag a little forming furrows between.

Different treatments suit different types of wrinkles.

Treatment of wrinkles

Cosmetic treatments available for the treatment of wrinkles include: surgical face lifts, laser resurfacing, dermabrasion, chemical peels, fillers, Botox injections, photo-rejuvenation and prescription creams. The following treatments are available here at the private skin laser clinic:

- Prescription creams, Retin A, used for several months, can be beneficial for fine lines, acne and uneven skin tone. It increases cell turnover and smooths the surface of the skin. It may cause some dryness and redness. A private prescription fee is £10.
- Photo-rejuvenation, is the treatment of the face using intense pulsed light (IPL) technology. It helps to refine uneven skin tone, reducing redness and brown marks. It also stimulates collagen production helping fine lines. Photo-rejuvenation makes the skin look smoother with minimal downtime. It cannot be used on tans or darker skin types. We use the Lumenis Vasculight for these treatments. Up to four treatments, performed at 6 – 8 week intervals, are recommended. Treatments start at £200.
- Botox® (Botulinum Toxin Type A) injections are used to relax the muscles that cause expression lines between the eyebrows - frown lines, forehead wrinkles, and beside the eyes - crow's feet. The effect is to smooth out the wrinkles and give a more relaxed, youthful appearance. The effect takes a couple of weeks to start and then wears off after 3 – 6 months when the treatment can be repeated.

Side effects are rare and reversible. Treatment costs £200 - £400 depending on the number of areas needing treating. Botox® is licensed for frown lines and is also used for other wrinkles.

- Fillers are used to fill out deeper creases and gravity lines. We use Hyaluronic acid, trade name Restylane®. Hyaluronic acid is one of the skin's own natural moisturising ingredients and occurs in all animals and is the same in all species. It is a clear gel with good safety profile and skin testing is not required. The gel is gradually absorbed, and its effect lasts 3 – 12 months. Treatment using one 0.5ml syringe costs £140; a 1.0ml syringe costs £250. Some treatments may need more than one syringe.
- Peels improve fine lines, sun damaged skin, acne scarring, freckles, age spots, melasma and other irregular pigmentation. With careful skin preparation they can be used on darker skin types, although the risk of unwanted pigment change is higher. We use the Obagi Blue peel. The active ingredient is TCA, a diluted acid that is painted over your face. This causes a burning sensation for 5 – 10 minutes. Your skin will be blue-grey and start to peel in 24 hours. This stage may last a few days. The new skin underneath is smoother, tighter and the complexion more even. Further improvement can be obtained by repeating the peel in 2 – 3 months time. A face peel costs £350-£600 depending on the depth of peel required. Preparatory creams are likely to cost around £90.

The assessment consultation is an opportunity to discuss all these treatments with a Consultant Dermatologist, you may find it helpful to jot down any questions beforehand. A private consultation costs £200. More detailed advice sheets are available for all the procedures.

How to postpone the development of wrinkles

Wrinkles are part of natural ageing; they have to be accepted as such. None of the treatments above can turn the clock back far and none are without risk. To help postpone the development of wrinkles we recommend the following:

- Use a moisturiser regularly; the cheaper ones can be as effective as the more expensive ones. Sunscreen makes a good moisturiser.
- Keep your face out of the sun and use sun block if exposure is unavoidable. Sunscreen can be used instead of moisturiser. If you need a tan on your face apply it from a bottle.
- Maintain a healthy and balanced diet and with plenty of natural anti-oxidant vitamins such as A, C and E to defend your body from the action of free radicals that cause damage to healthy cells.
- Stop smoking.

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