

# Younger crowd lead trend in non-surgical makeovers

BY MEGAN KESTERSON

Plastic surgery doesn't necessarily mean going under the knife anymore.

"The trend is toward less invasive surgeries such as the endoscopic forehead lift, smaller incision facelift, and cheek lift," said Dr. William Huffaker, board-certified plastic surgeon for St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery of Creve Coeur, who adds that these procedures are drawing a younger crowd.

In fact, the top five non-surgical proce-

dures of 2002 — Botox injections, chemical peels, microdermabrasion, laser hair removal, and sclerotherapy (removal of unsightly veins) — surpassed the most popular surgical procedure, rhinoplasty (nose reshaping) in 2002, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). These popular procedures are usually outpatient procedures.

The ASPS reported approximately 350,000 patients underwent rhinoplasty in 2002 compared to the more than 1.1 million patients who received Botox

injections. The national average for surgeon/physician fees for a Botox injection was \$422, while each nose-reshaping procedure cost about \$3,500.

St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery opened a medical spa, which employs 19 full-time doctors, nurses, and assistants, in July 2002. The spa offers services such as collagen replacement surgery, lip plumping, Botox injections, hair removal, vein treatment, and permanent makeup.

"We have added a medical spa that offers everything from bikini waxes to



From left: Dr. Herluf Lund Jr., Dr. Bruce White and Dr. William Huffaker.

botox injections, so we definitely have a big increase in non-surgical procedures," Huffaker said. "Business is good."

St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery began offering non-surgical intense pulse light therapy (IPL) photofacials in 1998 to remove dark pigmentation, facial veins, enlarged pores and age spots. People are now having less laser resurfacing surgery and coming in for the less abrasive IPL photofacials, said Dr. Herluf Lund Jr., board-certified plastic surgeon for St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery. The cost for five IPL treatments and two microdermabrasion treatments is \$2,500.

The St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery doctors, who see more than 900 patients a month, say that while non-surgical procedures are on the rise, the most popular of procedures is still breast augmentation. It accounts for 41 percent of all procedures at St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery.

Dr. Wilfrido Feliciano of Plastic Surgery Consultants Ltd. is seeing a couple of trends in facial rejuvenation. "Some doctors are actually turning toward deeper sculpting in facelifts, but others are going with more conservative, less-invasive procedures with much less down time for the patient."

Among these are endoscopic brow lifts that use a series of short incisions instead of the long surgical incision of a standard brow lift. "This technique is still being refined," he said.

There's also an interest in alternative techniques for filling skin depressions and wrinkles, he said. "Collagen injection is still the gold standard here, but it's usually absorbed by the body in three to six months, so it must be repeated often. Some doctors are now making more use of injected fat from other areas of the body; others are using hyaluronic acid injections, which may last longer."

Feliciano also said the industry is testing prototypes of "external ultrasound" machines for removing fat. "Liposuction, which does involve skin incision, is still the standard in this area," he said. "But these new machines may make it possible to remove body fat without breaking the skin."

*Julia Johnson contributed information for this story.*

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