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THE PERFECT TIMING

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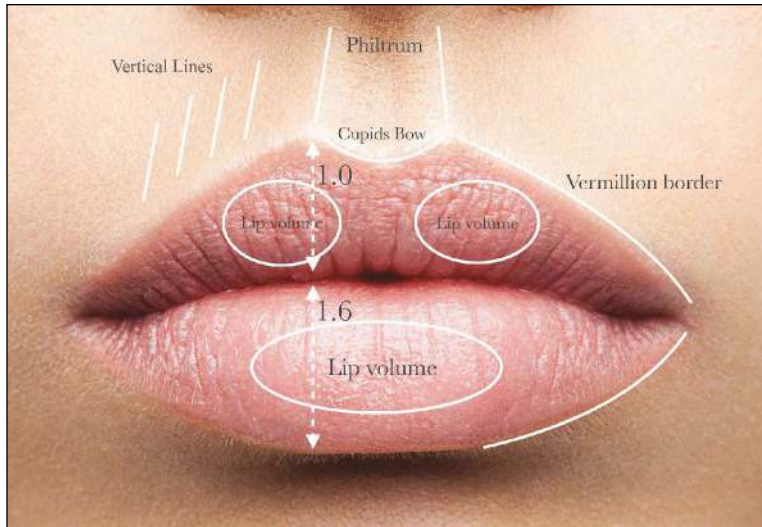
*In a perfectly timed complement to *Sophisticated Living's* first annual wedding edition, Dr. Biesman offers his expert advice regarding pre-wedding procedures...*

Several times per day, I am presented with the scenario that someone wants to freshen up his or her appearance for an upcoming wedding. These requests involve everyone from the bride and groom, to family members, friends, and even distant relatives. Everyone who presents this question has the same goal: they want to look their best on the special day. Just like with all wedding details, making a timeline for rejuvenation procedures will help you achieve your aesthetic goals well before the big day. Let's take you through some of the frequently presented scenarios and the type of advice I typically offer for each.

In general, I approach weddings a bit differently than I do most other events. Weddings can require a tremendous amount of planning and preparation, and are also emotionally charged events. For that reason, I like to do an evaluation and start planning any facial procedures as far in advance as possible. This gives us the opportunity to discuss goals, treatment options, and make a plan and a timeline in a relaxed manner where nothing is left to chance. In an optimal scenario, I like to meet with anyone who wishes to improve his or her appearance to get ready for a wedding 6-12 months in advance so that we can develop an organized plan.

Surgery. Despite all the advances in nonsurgical rejuvenation techniques, surgery is sometimes the best option to lift sagging eyebrows or eyelids, recontour the jawline, or remove excess tissue that has developed over time. If the relative risks of surgery outweighed the potential benefits, surgeons would not recommend these procedures. However, as is true of any procedure (and most things in life!), surgery does not always go exactly as planned. In a best-case scenario, I recommend allowing at least 6 months of recovery time from facial surgery prior to an event.

Noninvasive skin tightening (Thermage, Ultherapy). Noninvasive skin tightening treatments help provide contouring and lifting of the eyebrows, cheeks, jowls, and neck without surgery. These procedures are performed in the office without the need for anesthesia or recovery. Ultherapy provides more lifting while Thermage produces contouring. Bruising can sometimes occur after Ultherapy treatment. While both treatments are safe and effective, the results are more subtle than those generated by surgery. While immediate changes are noted after a properly performed skin tightening treatment, best results are seen approximately 3-6 months later, so it is important to plan accordingly.



Injectable Soft Tissue Fillers. Soft tissue fillers may be used to enhance naturally occurring structures in young people such as making lips fuller or filling in hollows under the eyes. Fillers can also restore a youthful look to those who have started to notice volume-related signs of aging in the eyebrows, cheeks, under eye area, lips, around the mouth, and jaw line. When fillers are injected well, it should not be obvious even to a keen eye that treatment was administered. Swelling and bruising can occur with filler injection, so for those who have never been treated previously, I strongly recommend doing the first session 3-4 months prior to the wedding. This allows for more than enough time to let things settle, add more if necessary, and make any subtle tweaks and adjustments well in advance. It also allows time for one to adjust to their new look. Fillers are often performed during the same visit as Botox injections, noninvasive skin tightening, and some laser treatments. I usually like to do a final filler evaluation about 6 weeks prior to the wedding. If you are considering filler treatment, make sure your provider is extremely experienced and also offers laser treatment to help any bruising that may develop resolve more quickly. Fillers are a key tool in helping men and women of almost any age look more youthful in a natural way. Best candidates: anyone who has noticed that their face looks older or more “tired” as may be evidenced by hollows under the eyes, loss of fullness to the cheeks, lips, area around the mouth, chin, or other areas. Brides often like to have injections in their lips or under their eyes.

Botox, Dysport, Xeomin. These products are pharmaceutical grade medications that are injected into muscles to help them relax. These drugs accomplish 1 of 2 goals: make lines caused by muscle contraction appear less deep and shape the face (lift the eyebrows, corners of the mouth, make the face appear more slim). The onset of effect of these products is typically 3-5 days with maximum effect evident at 2 weeks. For those new to these products, I recommend undergoing the first treatment 4-5 months in advance. As the duration of effect of these products is typically 3-4 months, the second treatment should be administered 1 month or so prior to the event. Timing treatments in this manner allows any adjustments to be made in advance of the wedding. When Botox and related drugs are used well, the effect is natural and relaxed. Best candidates: anyone with unwanted wrinkles or lines in their upper face or who feels they look sad or tired. Men and women of all ages can benefit from these products.



Intense Pulsed Light (IPL), Laser Skin Resurfacing. Treatment of skin wrinkling or discoloration is accomplished with the use of lasers or IPL. If you have a "ruddy" complexion, this can be lightened through a series of laser or IPL treatments. Three to six treatments may be required, spaced approximately 3-4 weeks apart, so you will want to start treatments several months before the wedding. It is important that your skin not be tanned at the time of treatment as treating tanned skin with lasers increases the risk of complications. If your goal is to clear both brown and red skin discoloration of the face, neck, chest, arms, back and even legs, IPL treatment is the best option. Again, several treatments will be required so allow sufficient time for several treatments. Downtime after IPL is minimal, but this is not a treatment to have performed within a few days of important photos or events.

Medical Grade Skin Care: A medical grade skin care regimen is the foundation to any aesthetic treatment plan. If you are not already following a plan prescribed by an expert skin care specialist, consider doing so as soon as possible. Chemical peels can also be used to augment the results of skin care, laser, and other treatments. It is important to have an established skin care regimen that is customized to your skin well in advance of the big event to ensure that you do not encounter allergic reactions or other unexpected surprises. Best Candidates: Everyone should be using a medical grade skin care regimen (including the right sunscreen) whether or not they are preparing for a special occasion.

Last Minute Skin-Rescue: So it is less than a week until the big day and you want your skin to look its absolute best for the wedding- what can you do to get a risk-free, instant (OK, it takes an hour) rejuvenation that will leave your skin glowing? The CO2 lift is a facial mask that may be applied in our office or, if you are careful, at home. The treatment takes an hour or so to complete and the results last 5-7 days. There are no known risks to CO2 lift treatment and there is nothing else like it available. The CO2 lift treatment is available only at limited locations, but is a great last-minute treatment to safely and effectively get a “glow”. Sometimes entire bridal parties will treat themselves! Best candidates: Anyone who wants their skin to look its best for a big event will benefit from the CO2 lift facial mask.

CoolSculpting: As part of wedding preparation we are often asked about CoolSculpting for treatment of unwanted fat on the belly, thighs, flanks (love-handles), back, arms and other areas. CoolSculpting is a safe and effective way to eliminate unwanted body fat and help dresses and tuxedos fit more comfortably. With each treatment, approximately 20% of the fat layer thickness is reduced. It takes up to 3 months to see best results, so this is another treatment to plan for well in advance of a wedding (4-6 months in case a second treatment is required). CoolSculpting is not a weight-loss technique and is not intended for the treatment of obesity. Ideal candidates are within 20-30 pounds of their ideal body weight and have stubborn bulges that just don't respond to diet and exercise. CoolSculpting is performed in the office without sedation or anesthesia. There is no downtime or recovery after treatment, although some patients experience cramping discomfort for a few days. Additional fat reduction can be achieved with each treatment session. Like any other medical procedure, achieving best results (and avoiding complications) with CoolSculpting requires a great deal of knowledge and experience. If you choose to pursue this remarkable treatment, do your homework and make certain you find a practitioner with many years of CoolSculpting experience. Best candidates: men or women who are within 20-30 pounds of their ideal body weight and have unwanted body fat in the belly, love handles, inner or outer thighs, back, arms, and other areas.

As you can see, planning a timeline well in advance of the big day can help you achieve your goals to look and feel your best! 