

## Can you get a facelift in a needle?

BONNIE ESTRIDGE, Daily Mail - 28th May 2002

Boots has recently announced it is offering Botox injections for around £200 in its high street beauty clinics.

This best-known form of non-surgical facelift 'freezes' muscles in the forehead to prevent frown lines. But how many other non-surgical facelifts are available, and how do they compare to going under the knife?

Julie Porte, 49, who works in her family furniture business and lives with her husband Steve, 51, and their children Lucy, 21, Simon, 18, and Hannah, 14, in Chiseldon, Wiltshire, decided to see how many treatments she could have in a week.

**Julie says . . .** A couple of months ago, I took a hard look in the mirror. I was getting older. I could see my face was at the point where it needed a major overhaul.

There were puffy lines under my eyes, and my nose-to-mouth lines had deepened, making the skin around them look loose and floppy.

I used to be a beauty therapist and knew Sally Gilbert-Wilson, who owns the Advanced Clinical Cosmetology Centre in London, so I looked at the injectable fillers she offered designed to rejuvenate your face.

My husband thought I was mad having substances injected into my face and that it



Before: Julie Porte  
before her treatments

was ridiculously expensive. But I was using my savings and I wanted to try it.

I decided on two sessions, five days apart and planned to target every wrinkle and use as many different products as I could, the best for each 'type' of wrinkle.

In all, I would have six different substances and 12 different injections, as the amounts of each needed to be divided evenly over each side of my face.

### **Botox (£350)**

The first session lasted an hour and a half and concentrated on freezing vertical frown lines on my forehead and smoothing out the crow's feet at the sides of my eyes with the muscle-paralysing bacteria Botox - a purified form of the botulism toxin found in food.

They also injected me just in front of my ears, under the lobes, which affects the muscles of the nasal-labial fold and helps soften deep nose-to-mouth lines. I also had Botox in the muscle directly above my top lip. This was to stop me 'puckering' my mouth, which gives you vertical 'smoker's' lines.

While most of the injections didn't feel too bad, this one was incredibly painful, probably because of the high number of nerves in the lips.

### **Embryocell (£228)**

Embryocell serum sterilised and filtered lamb cell extracts - was injected in the 'orbit' of the eye - the dark shadowy area underneath - and along the crow's feet. It replaces lost moisture and stimulates the growth of new cells. To get the full benefits, one should have these injections weekly for four to five weeks.

This treatment was not painful, which surprised me as the skin is so delicate in the under-eye area.

After the first session, my skin was a bit pink but not sore or swollen. By the time I went back five days later my frown lines had smoothed out and the previously 'crepey' skin of the under-eye area had puffed up and looked much smoother and fresher.

### **Juvederm: £600**

More exotic-sounding fillers were on the menu for my second session, which also lasted an hour and a half. I had a second Embryocell treatment, followed by Juvederm 24, a synthetic version of a substance found in the body that gives skin its plumpness.

This was injected into the horizontal 'worry' lines across my forehead.

Then, a stronger version of the same product - Juvederm 30 - was put into my lips to plump them up and give me back my old 'pout'. I'd had local anaesthetic cream put on my lips, but



After: Julie after all her injections

this injection made my eyes water.

### **Wrinkle Remover (£300)**

By far the most painful injection was Wrinkle Remover, made of polyacrylamide hydrogel, a very fine synthetic soft tissue filler, to fill in the thin but deep 'dents' above the lip-line and the corners of the mouth.

I was told this material has been used extensively for plastic surgery in China.

### **Amazingel (£920)**

The worst over, they injected Amazingel - the same as Wrinkle Remover but with larger molecules, to fill larger areas into my cheeks, rubbing them well to ensure no lumps formed.

I felt slight discomfort and both cheeks were very tender afterwards. I kept telling myself this was nothing compared to the pain of the surgeon's knife, though by now I was wondering whether a local anaesthetic injection might have helped.

### **Dermalive (£435)**

Finally, a filler called Dermalive - another product derived from hyaluronic acid - was used in my nose-to-mouth lines. This didn't hurt at all - but then, having had so many injections I wasn't quite sure what I could or couldn't feel.

I could see the results immediately. My cheekbones seemed to have re-appeared and my mouth and forehead seemed to have lifted, too. I was looking rather red and blotchy, but most of the pain from the injections had faded.

My face felt tight, but apart from a bruise just above my lip, there were no gory signs. After a few days, all the fillers had kicked in and smoothed out my skin.

This non-surgical facelift is very expensive, and the costs don't stop there - I will need top-ups every six months of all fillers except the Dermalive, which should last at least a year, and Amazingel, which could last up to two years.

The change was subtle - people kept telling me I looked well rather than asking me what I'd done to my face. Even my husband thinks I looked much more fresh and relaxed.

It's hard to say whether I actually look younger, but I know that going for the needle rather than the knife has definitely made me look good for my age.

**TOTAL: £2,833.**