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Hyaluronic Acid Facial Filler May Stimulate Natural Collagen Production, Plastic Surgeon Notes

Oak Park, Ill.—March 1, 2007—Restylane, a popular injectable anti-wrinkle treatment, appears to stimulate facial skin cells to make their own collagen, a basic skin protein, according to a clinical study reported in the Feb. 20 issue of the *Archives of Dermatology*.

This finding confirms what Allan Parungao, MD, a board-certified plastic surgeon who administers Restylane and Juvéderm, a newer hyaluronic acid injectable facial filler, is seeing in his patients. “In my observation, the longer a patient continues with hyaluronic acid-based facial fillers, the longer the results seem to last,” reports Dr. Parungao, author of *A Woman’s Guide to Cosmetic Breast Surgery and Body Contouring* (Addicus Books, 2006).

The clinical study showed that Restylane’s initial anti-wrinkle effect is caused merely by the presence of the filler in the skin. But three or four weeks after treatment, the skin actually begins forming its own new collagen.

What is hyaluronic acid?

“Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring sugar in the skin that holds collagen and elastin together. This essentially provides a framework for the skin,” Dr. Parungao explains.

“Injectable fillers such as Restylane and Juvéderm plump the facial skin, adding volume to minimize lines and wrinkles,” says Dr. Parungao. “These hyaluronic acid fillers work by pulling water into the skin. Patients notice the results immediately.”

“Since the clinical study on Restylane, the FDA has approved Juvéderm, another injectable hyaluronic acid filler,” says Dr. Parungao, one of a small group of U.S. physicians chosen to participate in a Juvéderm experience trial before it was introduced by Allergan in January.

Hyaluronic acid fillers surpass collagen injections

Hyaluronic acid fillers are extremely popular among busy patients seeking less-invasive procedures to address the signs of aging. According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), Americans received more than 1.2 million injectable hyaluronic acid treatments in 2005. Hyaluronic acid injections are normally given every six to 12 months.

Both Restylane and Juvéderm are available in several formulations to treat fine, medium and deep lines and wrinkles. “Hyaluronic acid fillers are commonly used to plump up the

nasolabial folds, which extend from the nose to the corners of the mouth, as well as lines in the glabella, or the area between the eyebrows,” Dr. Parungao explains.

Another reason for the rise in hyaluronic acid-based fillers: fewer allergic reactions. “Because earlier facial fillers such as collagen were derived from cows, patients had to undergo a pre-treatment skin test for allergies, then make a separate appointment for their first treatment,” says Dr. Parungao.

“But unlike collagen, hyaluronic acid is a natural component of the skin, so no pre-testing is required and allergic reactions are rare. Patients can be treated on their very first doctor visit,” Dr. Parungao explains. “And hyaluronic acid poses no risk of transmitting animal diseases by injection.”

With the popularity and precision of hyaluronic acid facial fillers, the use of collagen injections has plummeted. The ASAPS reports that 220,000 collagen treatments were administered in 2005 – a 72% decrease from 2004 figures.

Allan Parungao, MD, is an Oak Park, Illinois plastic surgeon board-certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. On Saturday and Sunday, March 3-4, he will offer complimentary five-minute mini-consultations at the Chicagoland Health & Beauty Expo at the Renaissance Convention Center in Schaumburg, Ill. For more information, visit www.parungao.com.

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