

## Advances In Cosmetic Procedures

By Don J. Fontana, MD

The advent of make-over television programming has contributed to patient's expectations that cosmetic improvement of the face and figure can be achieved quickly with little or no down time. The practice of cosmetic surgery has adjusted to this concept in order to satisfy the wishes of the aging baby boom generation. Patients are now accepting less invasive cosmetic procedures, that is, procedures that may not produce the, "wow, you look great," to techniques that may be designated as quick fixes. The trade-off is an improvement, though more subtle than a surgical procedure balanced by less down time, smaller incisions and lower costs.

The quick fixes for facial rejuvenation deal with the primary issue of loose skin associated with sun damage and the aging process. Devices such as Thermage or ThermoCool act on the collagen content of the skin. A treatment is intended to increase collagen content, mildly tighten loose skin and

improve the textural quality of the facial skin. It is an office procedure, non-invasive without any incisions or bandages and lasts approximately two years. The cost of the procedure has recently been reduced to promote patient interest. It is not comparable to a face or neck lift, but can offer patients who have the fear of surgery an alternative choice. It can be repeated as frequently as is necessary to achieve the desired result. Various techniques of chemical peels can also offer the patient an alternative to improve skin color and texture.

The Thread Lift and "Feather Lift" may be considered the next step in less invasive procedures for tightening loose facial and neck skin. The principles of these techniques are similar. A barbed permanent suture is passed beneath the skin in the areas of the cheek and neck. As many as 6-12 of these are placed on each side of the face or neck. The suture is then sequentially pulled backward to achieve the desired change. The suture is then secured to the muscular fascia in the



neck or beneath the scalp in the temple region through an incision one to two inches long. Although the technique is touted as a lunch hour, office procedure, results are best when the patient is heavily sedated. Since no excess skin is removed, the procedure is best suited for the younger patient.

All the ancillary procedures including Botox, skin fillers such as Restylane, Radiesse, Juvéderm and laser resurfacing all are effective in the hands of an experienced plastic surgeon. For additional information, contact an experienced board certified plastic surgeon.