

Canada's first major anti-ageing exhibition will demonstrate the benefits of collagen, botox, eyebrow transplants and chemical peels

# Putting your best face forward

By SERENA FRENCH  
in Toronto

You're invited to a coming-out party: for cosmetic surgery and self-improvement of the human surface.

The New You 2002 may be the first event of its kind in North America on such a scale. Certainly it is Canada's first major anti-ageing show for consumers. The exhibition is being held in Toronto at the Metro Convention Centre next Friday to Sunday. Organizers expect up to 15,000 people — about half the number that turn out to examine home improvement possibilities at the Interior Design show — to hear Canada's top cosmetic surgeons explain how "the rat in a wind tunnel" look has been replaced by a more natural effect, as well as watch them inject "face fillers" and perform eyebrow transplants and other live surgical demonstrations.

Cosmetic surgeons will be joined by cosmetic dentists, dermatologists, leading hair, beauty and skin care experts, fashion consultants and yoga teachers who are seeking to educate consumers about their options for transformation.

"This is one of the first shows in Canada that deals with these topics on a large formal basis for public education," says Dr. Fred Weksberg, a Toronto cosmetic dermatologist. "We do a lot in our office, and there are a lot of misconceptions out there and a lot of misinformation. All the doctors here are really excellent experts in their field, so the information is really first hand."

The show is the brainchild of Ann Kaplan, CEO of Medicaid, a company set up in 1996 to offer financing to people seeking elective or non-medicaid-covered procedures, from laser hair removal to fertility treatments.

Through her company, Kaplan has built up a knowledge base for the demand for this type of consumer show. "We became aware of how much people didn't know and how many questions were being asked. It was time we did this."

The show wasn't put together to promote anything, she says. "It was put together to provide information. Many people are not aware of what's on the market. If they're aware of injectables, they aren't aware of the different types of injectable. It might be a scar. They don't know they can fill in or conceal with tattooing. Until you've had something slightly altered in your appearance that bothered you, you don't realize how much better it makes you feel."

According to figures collected by the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, 5.7 million procedures were performed in the United States in 2000, and the number of cosmetic medical procedures is rising by 35% a year. Since 1992, the number of facelifts performed has increased 181% and the number of men having cosmetic surgery has increased 80%.

Dr. Weksberg, who will be doing some live demonstrations on his own patients, credits Botox, which he has used for five years in his own practice, for "outing" cosmetic surgery. The drug, made from botulism bacteria that work by paralyzing muscle, has also created a resurgence of interest in collagen and other "face fillers" that are injected into the skin to plump up lines.

"The demand for less invasive things has increased," says Dr. Weksberg. "There's less risk. A lot of the innovations have been exactly that: an injection, a peel, things that can be done over a lunch hour, and not have to recuperate, hiding for two weeks."

"It's a growth industry," says Dr. Lorne Tarshis, a Toronto cosmetic surgeon who specializes in facelifts. He says he only gets busier every year, thanks to a technology that almost creates, more than meets, demand. Endoscopes, cameras, smaller incisions, lasers have all come to the forefront in the last five to seven years. "It opens up a whole new audience who wants something done, but weren't prepared for surgery, didn't want surgery or didn't need surgery," says Dr. Tarshis. "At some point someone has to notice there's a big audience out there — let's give them as much information as we can."

Baby Boomers are driving the trend, receiving 43% of all procedures.

"This has all converged because of that bulge of people born between 1946 and 1964," says Dr. Stephen Mulholland, a Toronto cosmetic surgeon. "Those Baby Boomers created that whole cult of vitality and youth, they created the jogging and the fitness clubs, and the aerobics, and the step classes. You have all these people that are turning 50 who have great cardio



STEVE MARCUS / REUTERS

A trade show like no other will be held in Toronto this month. It will teach an ageing population inexpensive ways to look young again.

fitness, who are on the Zone diet, and they look in the mirror and their face is zoned out. It's looking old. They don't like the disharmony between the internal environment and what they're projecting."

Sandra Rapkin, Dr. Weksberg's patient co-ordinator, thinks the show will be a success. "A lot of people don't like to talk about things, and they are afraid. If they are able to see it done on someone or they are able to talk to someone they feel comfortable with, then they have the interest to do it."

Because she sells it, Ms. Rapkin likes to know what it's about. She's had collagen in her lips and along the nasal labial lines and the oil commissures, botox in her labella (between the eyes) and crow's feet, and liposuction at her hips, stomach and thighs after a significant weight loss. The liposuction cost about \$6,000. The Botox, \$700 every four months, and the collagen, \$450 every two months. "It's a very expensive upkeep. But we are so busy. People come in and they spend a fortune: a thousand and a thousand, and a thousand. They just want to feel good, and it's all temporary. But how some people do it is they spend a lot of money before Christmas and before the summer, and they do themselves out. Other people really stretch it so they do it three times a year."

She thinks a lot of people are unhappy with the way they look: "Getting old, not liking the lines on your face, looking tired. People want to look as good as they can look, if they can afford it. Even if they can't afford it. I've seen people who actually take out loans to do this."

Others just make lifestyle sacrifices. A 47-year-old real estate agent who spent \$15,000 on a facelift says it was worth every penny, though she estimates it will take up to a year to get the skin back to its normal colour tone. "I really needed a new car which I didn't buy. I love clothes and I haven't bought any in about a year. I thought, well, this is something that everybody sees every day and it really just makes me feel better about myself. My brother is 13 years younger and we go a lot of places together. I lost my husband last year and it was kind of like, well, I have to get back out there. Last year I felt uncomfortable being with people that age, and now I don't. It's something that's been bothering me for a long time and last year I made the decision: 'I'm going to do it.'"

Aside from the Baby Boomers with ageing signs that don't reflect how they feel, Dr. Tarshis says other people have "genetic or expressive tendencies that detract from their overall appearance: A frown line that won't go away, bags under their eyes that make them look tired, but they're not old, they've just got genetic bags."

One 47-year-old accountant, who did not want her name used, decided to have a \$350 Botox injection for a marked furrow between her brows, after reading an article in which the 61-year-old actress Anne Bancroft said she used it. "If I can go three times a year, I say that's not too bad at all: less than \$100 a month for a line that really defines someone as ageing. It's such a little thing, but it makes a profound difference in the way that I look. People say, 'Oh, you look good, and that's it.'"

Dr. Mulholland says that along with lip augmentation — "the Angelina Jolie craze" — breast augmentation has also come back full force. And it's not actresses, divorcees and teenagers — he won't operate on this last group for implants.

"Women that I see now mostly are 35, they have had two kids, and their breasts have deflated to the point where they're not even feminine any more. It's almost like cosmetic reconstruction, where we're giving back body image where it's been taken away. They are irritated that they went through childbirth, they've created the family, they're back in the workforce and they can't wear anything."

"In an ideal world, you say this is my contribution to society, look at my rippling central sulcus and my witty, articulate left brain. But this is not the reality that we live in. So they want to achieve something resembling what they had."

Silicone gel implants are available again. The FDA health protection branch ruled that the hysteria in the early 1990s about alleged risk was not founded.

Sept. 11 also served to fuel an increase in non-surgical enhancements. "Bigger surgical procedures were down because people's portfolios were down 50, 60% and suddenly a \$20,000 surgical procedure was not something they wanted to do right now. And the risk. People were feeling badly and

going under the knife is not wise when you're feeling that way. But other things like photo facials, injectable fillers, cellulite therapy, facials, Pan-G lifts were all up — 25% over last year. In times of stress when they feel threatened by world events, perhaps their skin is one thing they can take control of and look in the mirror and feel good about it. That's my hypothesis anyway."

"Or they say, Okay, we just cancelled our Caribbean trip, I'm going to do something to feel good."

"Surgery is a planned event," says Dr. Tarshis, "but some things like Botox for a wrinkle or filler injections, they're more spontaneous. The whole industry has seen that increase since Sept. 11. It is a phenomenon. And I think it's going to sustain itself, because those people are now seeing what the positive no-downtime type of treatments can do for themselves."

A 40-year-old consultant who spent \$10,000 on veneers for her teeth but saw her mother through a facelift and abdominoplasty wouldn't choose cosmetic surgery for herself in the future. "I'm less inclined because I'm no longer naive to the reality. The result is phenomenal, but oh, my God, I didn't recognize her when I first saw her because there was tremendous swelling, and people don't tell you those things. So I think I'll take good care of my skin and keep going to the gym. If I'm a little wiser about my health I might be able to avoid those things."

That said, she will go to the New You show. "I'm curious. People spend a lot of time on themselves putting their best foot forward, be it their clothes, their home, their car. The body is something that travels with you at all times. Why not make that same emphasis?"

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## GLOSSARY

A guide to some of the most important cosmetic surgical, non-surgical procedures.

**Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)** A surgical procedure to remove loose skin and stretch marks of the abdomen and to tighten muscles following weight loss or childbirth.

**Blepharoplasty (Eyelid Lift)** A surgical procedure that reduces the appearance of puffy or drooping eyelids and under-eye bags. Excess skin and fat are removed and skin is tightened.

**Botox** An injectable drug made from the botulism bacteria, Botox is most commonly used to soften the appearance of expression lines on the forehead and on crow's feet. It works by paralyzing small areas of muscle thereby decreasing the ability to frown or squint. Results last from three to six months.

**Chemical Peel** Resurfaces skin, treating wrinkles, scars and uneven pigmentation, by removing the skin's outer layer with a chemical solution. Strengths vary and solutions range from mild to strong.

**Collagen** An injectable filler, collagen is used to enhance lips and minimize the appearance of wrinkles and facial lines. Results are temporary.

**Endermology** The process of using a deep massage, vacuum-like device to smooth the appearance of cellulite. Several treatments are given; monthly maintenance treatments are usually required.

**Endoscopic Lifts** This method, used in forehead lifts and face lifts, is performed with minimal incisions using an endoscope (a fiberoptic telescope) that allows surgeons to view muscles and tissues beneath the skin. Small incisions result in less scarring and faster recovery time.

**Hyaluronic Acids** Injectable fillers used to enhance lips and minimize the appearance of facial lines. These substances swell under wrinkles and folds, plumping them up. Treatments need to be repeated every three to six months.

**Laser Skin Resurfacing** A procedure to treat deep wrinkles and sun damage, acne scars and uneven pigmentation. Lasers vaporize the skin, removing damaged outer layers, and also stimulate collagen growth. The use non-ablative lasers, using intense pulsed light or laser energy, create rejuvenation of the skin with little to no recovery time.

**Microdermabrasion** This non-chemical procedure improves skin texture, addressing fine lines, age spots and acne scars. A stream of fine crystals (aluminum oxide or salt) followed by mild suction passes over the area to be treated, removing the outer layer of skin to reveal the smooth under layer. Treatments are generally required once a month.

**Microfat Injections** Help to restore fullness to facial contours; also for lip enhancement. Fat is extracted from one area of the body and injected into another. Results can last up to two years.

**Photo Rejuvenation** The use of intense pulsed light to reach the deep layer of skin. Used to lessen fine lines and wrinkles, smooth skin texture and fade rosacea, pinkness and pigment problems. Several treatments are required.

**Tooth Whitening** At-home whitening: A gel is placed in a customized mouth tray and worn for several hours a day, usually at night. Results appear in about a week. In-Office Laser Whitening: A laser hyperactivates the gel so it works faster and more efficiently.

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