

# STOP THE SAGGING

NECK PROCEDURES  
by connie MITCHELL



Dr. L. Mike Nayak of Nayak Plastic Surgery and Skin Enhancement Center notes it's important to realize that each type of procedure has a specific purpose. He says most people benefit from a customized combination based on their individual needs. He also emphasizes the importance of sunscreen. "Sun-weathered skin is really beyond the help of lasers or peels," he says. "You just can't rejuvenate it

Author Nora Ephron said it plainly in the title of her 2006 bestseller, *I Fed Bad About My Neck*. Speaking for millions of women, Ephron bemoaned the inevitable effects of aging: wrinkles, sagging, double chins, jowls and the dreaded wattle. But the good news is that options abound for rejuvenation of the neck, chin and jaw.

"When we age, there are two processes at work: descent and deflation," says Dr. Gregory Branham, division chief of facial plastic surgery at Washington University School of Medicine. "The supporting tissues that hold everything in place become weaker, and gravity takes hold. That's why we develop jowls and laxity in the tissues of the neck."

Redistribution of fat also contributes to a fuller appearance in the lower third of the face, he adds. At the same time, the skin itself begins to show the effects of sun exposure and smoking through loss of collagen and elasticity, which contributes to a thin, crepe-like appearance. "Sagging jowls and wattles can be resuspended," Branham says. "And because the

fat distribution changes over time, we also work to balance the face and make it look more youthful by removing fat or adding fat or filler."

Removing fat can be achieved through small doses of liposuction, explains Dr. Tim Jones of Genesis Cosmetic Surgery and Laser Center. "It's common to remove some fat, tighten the skin and muscle with a lift procedure, and do a light chemical peel to erase fine wrinkles," he says. "But this combination requires a board-certified plastic surgeon who is experienced in both surgical and non-surgical techniques."

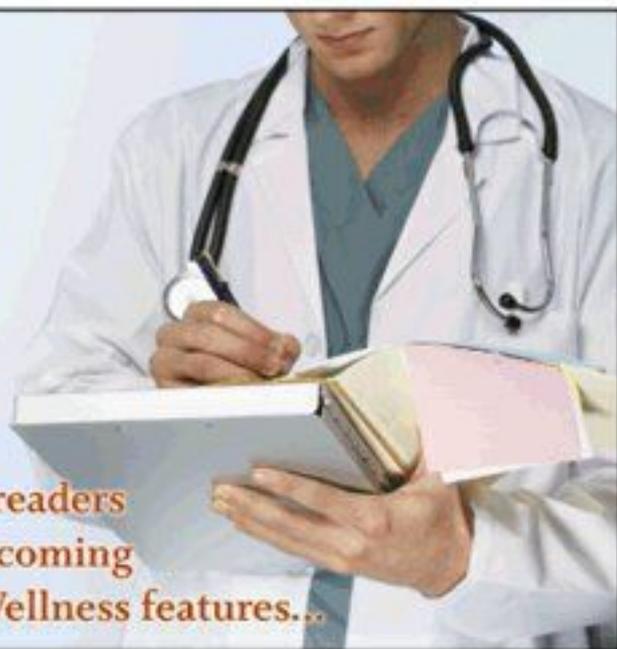
Laser treatments are beneficial to remove brown pigmentation and surface wrinkles from the skin. Newer types of lasers also stimulate collagen production and improve skin texture to provide a degree of tightening. However, these less-invasive techniques are not effective in repairing considerable sagging, Jones says. Yet for women who are just starting to notice tissue descent, laser treatments and the use of fat transfers or fillers can improve appearance, he says.

once it's been badly sun-damaged. That's why sunscreen is the No. 1 skin care value for the dollar."

Nayak also explains that men who seek treatment for neck wattles need a different approach than women. "With women, we can lift the face and reattach the skin under the chin and beside the ears," he says. "Most women can hide the scars with their hair, and the procedure lasts quite a while. Men, on the other hand, have heavier skin that can restretch faster. There are also issues with moving heavily bearded skin from the lower part of the face to the area beside the ear."

The solution for men involves removing the wattle using a Z-shaped incision under the chin. The downside to this approach is the inability to correct heavy jowls. Yet many men opt for a 'Z-plasty' to avoid problems related to a traditional lift. "We mix and match treatments based on what's appropriate," Nayak says. "It's important to communicate exactly what it is you don't like to your doctor and then go with the treatment plan most appropriate for you." ♣

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