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WINTER 2019

CELEB SECRETS

HOLLYWOOD'S HUSH-HUSH SURGERIES

LAUREN HUTTON

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ALL THINGS AUTOLOGOUS

By definition, autologous describes any cells or tissues that are obtained from and then used on the same individual. "It means 'from yourself' or the same tissue composition, as opposed to an allogenic procedure, which would be using something foreign or from others, explains New York plastic surgeon David Rapaport, MD. Before their expansion into cosmetic treatments, autologous procedures were used by oncologists treating cancer with a patient's own stem cells and orthopedic surgeons utilizing bone grafting to heal and repair broken bones. Aesthetic medicine has been equally ingenious in the category, finding ways to enhance one's contours with fat harvested from an area of the body that can spare it, improve the results of treatments through the introduction of a patient's own platelet-rich plasma (PRP), and add hair nearly anywhere it's desired, from the top of the head to the eyebrows.

One of the most notable advantages of autologous treatments is the high likelihood that the body will accept one's own tissues and cells with a far lower risk of complications. "Our system was designed to be defensive and have an immune response when it determines something foreign. This is how we react against bacteria, viruses and substances that appear harmful," says Beverly Hills, CA oculoplastic surgeon Raymond Douglas, MD. "Unfortunately, these reactions can also occur when using foreign substances for repair or cosmetic purposes."

Dr. Rapaport concurs, saying, "By using one's own tissues or cells, one need not be concerned about sensitivi-

ties, allergic reactions or rejection, and in theory, autologous treatment may save money by not requiring synthetic filler materials."

However, autologous treatments aren't without their disadvantages, from stem cells' lack of clinically proven effectiveness in aesthetic treatments to fat's unpredictable longevity. "The volume you will get is less and may require repeat treatments," according to Wayne, NJ facial plastic surgeon Jeffrey Wise, MD. "The take-rate is 25 to 50 percent, which makes it challenging to predict how much volume the patient will see." That retention, however, will last forever, and fat will also improve the quality of the overlying skin, which does not occur with synthetic fillers.

PEAK HARVEST

In order to use one's own fat in an area of the body where more volume is desired, it must first be harvested from elsewhere in the body. Denver plastic surgeon Manish Shah, MD says this is done with mini liposuction, during which a saline solution containing lidocaine and adrenaline is injected into fatty areas of the body—usually the thighs, abdomen or anywhere fat deposits tend to be more stubborn throughout weight fluctuation—and then the fat is then removed by suctioning it out through small metal tubes.

One increasingly popular option for harvesting and prepping fat that's heading to another part of the body is a system called Revolve. Allergan touts it as "the only all-in-one fat-processing device that harvests, filters, actively washes, and removes [collagen] strands," (these strands can clog the syringes used for injection). Studies have shown that, in addition to rapidly concentrating adipose tissue, Revolve thoroughly washes it for higher-quality fat.

There are a number of ways harvested fat can be used in the face, many of which echo the way a plastic surgeon or dermatologist might use a hyaluronic acid-based filler to enhance cheek shape or lip size. However, in addition to the harvesting process, the injection process is different as well.

"Typically, fat transfer is injected with a microcannula—not needles—and in a 1:1 ratio, because we know some of the fat will not take," Dr. Wise explains. There's also a few days of downtime with fat transfer, whereas fillers have no downtime.

"Patients who get fat transferred for facial contour often get it simultaneously with other procedures, such as

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