

A lift turn

By DEBRA SCOTT

If you're looking for a quick facelift without surgery, a new procedure called coblation may be just what the doctor ordered.

A type of skin resurfacing that uses radio waves, coblation is the latest entry into the face-fixing field, a technique so new only a handful of doctors in the tri-state area are doing it.

Plastic surgeon Fredric Newman, one of the first doctors to embrace the procedure, said he's followed the clinical trials of coblation for years.

"I'm not one to be on the cutting edge of things," says Newman, who is affiliated with Roosevelt Hospital. "I would prefer to have someone else use their patients as guinea pigs."

But the Darien- and Scarsdale-based doctor said he liked the gentleness, safety and effectiveness of the procedure, which was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in March, 2000.

"It's one of the few things in years that has impressed me," said Newman, who introduced the technique at the Aesthetic Surgery Center in Darien, Conn. "We've had models fly in from Europe to try it."

Coblation differs from dermabrasion, acid peels and laser treatments by using radio waves.

All of them abrad the skin, thus triggering cells into a healing mode and generating fresh collagen. It's the depletion of collagen, which makes skin

Coblation, a new technique, removes facial wrinkles but won't leave you all red

looser and rougher, that creates aged-looking skin. Dermabrasion sands the skin. Acid peels burn it with chemicals. Laser techniques, including strong applications and milder ones using so-called cool lasers, zap the face with a beam.

"The problem with cool or Erbiuim lasers such as the ubiquitous N-Lite Laser Therapy, is their low level of effectiveness," said Newman. "I can't tell you how many patients have told me that N-Lite doesn't work."

On the other hand, hotter CO2 lasers do reduce wrinkles and smooth the face, but "they really blast the skin," said Newman. Your skin can stay red for as long as six months, he said.

Coblation, whose name is derived from the cold ablation (or evaporation) that orthopedists use to remove diseased cartilage from knees, relies on radio waves to molecularly disintegrate tissues layer by layer.

David Goldberg, director of Laser Research at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, practices

coblation at all four of his offices, two of which are on the Upper East Side.

Though he specializes in lasers, Goldberg stresses that light sources and radio frequency devices are interrelated.

"They all put out energy that impacts on the skin to change something we're not happy with," he says.

With its precision and -relatively low temperatures (195 degrees Fahrenheit), coblation causes minimum damage to healthy tissue (another drawback of lasers), according to Newman.

The 15 to 45 minute procedure is performed under local anesthesia, and the result, he said, is a gentle method for reducing wrinkles, evening out skin tone and softening scars.

Newman did note that coblation is not as effective in reducing severe wrinkles as the CO2 lasers, but it has a shorter recovery time of one to two weeks.

Newman said that a fashion model who underwent the treatment was able to do a photo shoot nine days later, though makeup was required to cover some lingering redness.

"-My biggest problem is getting coblation patients to come back for a follow up visit," says Newman. "They're so happy with the results I can't drag them back."

As for the cost, Newman charges \$4,600 for a full face, including sedation; \$2,500 for partial treatment without sedation. For more info, see www.coblation.com