



Gravity calling

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Q) "I am 40+ and it appears the fat in my cheeks is moving south and disappearing from my face. I have a strong jaw line and no double chin but my lower face is starting to collapse into saggy skin. What are my options in terms of products / treatment?" – feebnewbie, WA

A) "This is quite typical of the ageing process. In medical terms we describe it as sun damage and genetic ageing. Sun damage contributes to the changes in collagen, which means that it's not as strong as it once was. This causes the skin to be stretchy and elastic (the technical term is elastosis) and it loses the ability to fight gravity. It becomes worse after menopause as we actually begin to make a weaker form of collagen.

As for the fat pads, there are several located in the face and as you age, so do they. This is genetically determined and leads to flattening of the cheeks. To add to this problem, the body elements of the face begin to be reabsorbed, further leading to structural loss. As the muscles of the face are anchored in the tissues, rather than bone, they all move south with the tissues.

Before the development of modern dermal fillers, a facelift was the only solution. Some would argue not a terrific one and I often tell patients that it removes wrinkles but doesn't restore youthfulness.

Now the modern person has access to dermal fillers that can last an estimated two years. They refill the cheek and re-sculpt the face, returning the fullness that we associate with youthfulness.

The great news is that these are walk in, walk out treatments, with minimal bruising. It's generally affordable and non-surgical (ie. not permanent) which means the patient has maximum control and flexibility.

You need to choose a doctor who has a focus on this treatment and I would encourage you to visit the CPSA website – www.cosmeticphysicians.org.au to find a doctor in your area.

In addition you can improve the quality of the skin with use of a good vitamin C serum, vitamin A derived night cream and I would suggest that you could also use some clinical strength glycolics (up to 18 per cent)."

– Dr Gabrielle Caswell from the Cosmetic Physicians Society of Australasia

Products to try:

Beautician's Secret Vitamin C Instant Energy Serum

Skin Doctors Potent C Triple Strength Vitamin C Serum

Dr. Spiller Biocosmetic Vitamin A Night Cream

Bloom Saving Face – Multi Vitamin Face Cream

NeoStrata Foaming Glycolic Wash

Alpha-H 15% Glycolic Hydration Mask