



HEALTH



Dr. Steven Yarinsky holds two anti-aging products, Juvederm Injectable Gel and Botox, at the Saratoga Springs Plastic Surgery office on Wells Street on Thursday.

Money doesn't equal happy

By SHARI ROAN
Los Angeles Times

Money is an emotional issue, especially during economic hard times. Social scientists always have warned that once a person's basic needs are met money doesn't buy happiness.

But if you're wondering, or maybe even arguing over, what to do with any precious discretionary income these days, a new study suggests how to get the biggest emotional bang for your buck.

Ryan Howell, an assistant professor of psychology at San Francisco State University, found that buying experiences — such as vacations, going to the theater or renting a sailboat — gave people more happiness than buying material things. The study, of 154 people ages 19 to 50, showed that experiences increase happiness because they are often social in nature. In addition, however, experiences tend to make people feel more alive.

"People report a sense of feeling invigorated or inspired," Howell said in an interview. Experiences may also yield more happiness because people are left with positive memories, a sort of return on their investment.

"It's not that material things don't bring any happiness. It's just that they don't bring as much," Howell said. "You're happy with a new television set. But you're thrilled with a vacation."

The study was presented recently at an annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology and will be published later this year in the *Journal of Positive Psychology*.

Love the skin you're in?

By MEG HAGERTY
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Vice President Joseph Biden, almost 20 years older than his boss, seems to have turned back the aging clock, if his forehead is any indication.

Controversy surrounded the Obama-Biden campaign late last year over whether Biden had Botox injections before the televised debate with then vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

Early photos of Biden circulated over the Internet showed a markedly more youthful appearance from his days in the Senate to now.

If he indeed did have work done, he's not alone. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, there were approximately 4.6 million Botox injections in the United States in 2007, easily the most popular anti-aging treatment in the country.

Botox is an "exotoxin" derived from botulism toxin bacteria that stops the nerve transmission across the nerves that activate muscles.

"It's basically a muscle relaxant," said Dr. Steven Yarinsky, a board-certified plastic surgeon in practice in Saratoga Springs for 20 years. His expertise is in cosmetic medicine.



Various skin care products are displayed at the Saratoga Springs Plastic Surgery office on Thursday.

Botox is commonly used on the forehead, between the eyebrows or for the crow's feet around the eyes. It also can treat the neck area, too. The injection costs between \$300 and \$400 and lasts three to six months.

The "paralyzed" forehead look that Biden seems to have is the result of too much of the exotoxin being used, Yarinsky said.

"(It's important) to give just the right amount to soften expression," he said, Yarinsky and esthetician, Joanne Moran, recently discussed other popular anti-aging procedures being used in his Saratoga Springs office.

Though Yarinsky sees clients in their 20s and 30s, he said many are motivated to renew their appearance once they hit 40.

"Most people tend to feel like they're 40 for the rest of their lives. If they look in the mirror and they don't look 40, there's usually a mismatch from the way they feel to the way they look," he said.

The simplest treatment, like microdermabrasion, is also the least expensive. Chemical peels with glycolic acid, most effective as a series of treatments, minimizes lines and exfoliates the top layer of dead skin. Moran said this should be done in a doctor's office because of the "higher percentage" of glycolic acid.

The outer skin layer is scraped and glycolic acid is applied. This lifts the dead

GUIDELINES FOR PATIENTS

- Research a board-certified specialist in cosmetic surgery. "There's no New York state regulation against an internist or ER physician who now has opened up a cosmetic medicine practice. We're going to have to continue to educate the public about that," Yarinsky said.
- Ask the physician to supply names of patients who have been through similar procedures.
- Because the exotoxin is expensive, Yarinsky cautioned that some spas and nurses,

working without the guidance of a physician, may be diluting Botox or using too little to make a difference.

- Yarinsky said the laser procedures and invasive surgeries have a "high safety profile" when performed by a board-certified plastic surgeon.

For more information

Go to www.surgery.org for those considering cosmetic surgery or non-invasive treatments.

skin cells, a carbon dioxide ice ball sloughs them off and the area is protected by sunscreen. There is no down time for the procedure. Yarinsky said it usually takes five or six treatments to reach a plateau, and then clients come back every month or so for a touch up. Treatments are roughly \$75 per visit.

Fillers like Juvederm Injectable Gel or Restylane are used to diminish the nasolabial folds so the "parentheses" on either side of the mouth are smoothed away. These injections are more expensive than Botox, costing about \$750 per syringe and requiring "at least" two. Results can last more than a year, however.

"We find a lot of patients treated even two years ago who don't require re-treatment at this time, which is kind of neat," Yarinsky said.

An alternative to the off-

the-shelf preparations are "harvesting" a patient's own body fat to plump lines on the face. Yarinsky said excess fat from the abdomen, hips or thighs can be used. This procedure might only be needed once over the lifetime.

During a patient consultation, Yarinsky wants to find out what clients are hoping to accomplish through either non-invasive or surgical techniques.

"There are some people for whom the 'S' (surgery) word is so off limits they don't want to have anything to do with it. But often they'll never get near the results we can give them with well-done cosmetic surgery," he said.

Surgery

A "lifting" procedure involving surgery is an individualized process that can't be measured in how many years

younger one expects to look.

"It's amazing. I'll see two people (in the office), they're exactly the same age, like 50-ish. One will look like they're 40 and they've never had anything done and the other will look 65. Maybe they'll have had some health problems or massive weight loss or droopy skin. It's not how young we can make them, it's what we can do with that particular person," Yarinsky said.

Not everyone is a candidate for surgery, however. Yarinsky doesn't consider doing eyelid lifts, for instance, until the patient is in the 30s or 40s because that's when skin sag becomes more apparent. Face lifts aren't considered in his practice until the patient is in the 40s or 50s.

Eyelid lifts are usually permanent, but neck and face lifts are not.

"The skin continues to stretch with time and can need a touch up. The older you are, the shorter it lasts," Yarinsky said.

He also won't do surgery on patients who have significant medical problems, if someone is expecting unrealistic results, or if the patient can't pinpoint changes he or she wants made.

For those who are good candidates, however, Yarinsky feels he's offering a type of "psycho surgery," whereby he can make people feel the way they used to. When self-esteem is restored, clients can go on to live happy lives without the need of psychological counseling.

Lasers

Yarinsky also uses lasers in

his practice. He credits lasers with having minimized recovery time for patients.

Aging is aggravated by gravity and environmental effects. When a face lift is used in conjunction with a laser procedure, the laser is "like the icing on the cake," he said.

"Making the cake (the facelift) is putting everything back where it belongs. Treating the skin with the laser or doing (non-invasive procedures) can dramatically improve the results."

Fine lines, freckling and sun damage can be eradicated with a full face or Ultra-Pulse laser, a treatment Yarinsky calls "the gold standard."

It runs between \$6,000 and \$7,000 and should last a lifetime if the patient stays away from the hazards that led to the laser treatment in the first place, like the sun. It takes two weeks to heal and requires anesthesia, however.

"It costs thousands of dollars less than a face lift and eyebrow lift and yet the results can be that good," he said.

Another type of laser, the light sheer, for instance, is useful for getting rid of hair from the ear area in men.

Moran said laser hair removal has transformed the lives of some female patients who, as they've gotten older, have had to shave a beard-like growth from their faces daily.

What about over-the-counter vitamin and nutritional supplements advertised to renew the skin?

"If something like that ever worked, believe me, everyone would get it," Yarinsky said with a chuckle.

Obesity is a concern during a pregnancy

By SHARI ROAN
Los Angeles Times

Obesity has become a common complication of pregnancy. About one-third of U.S. women of reproductive age are obese, according to recent data.

Obesity during pregnancy raises the risk of numerous problems for the mother, such as hypertension and diabetes, and for the baby, such as preterm birth.

It also increases the chances that the baby will have a birth defect.

A report published this week in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reviewed 39 studies exploring the association between obesity during pregnancy and birth defects.

The researchers, from Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, found babies of obese women had twice the risk of having a neural tube defect.

These babies also had an elevated risk of a heart defect, cleft palate or cleft lip, anorectal atresia (an abnormality of the anus or rectum), hydrocephaly (an enlargement of the ventricles of the brain due to fluid) and limb reduction defects.