

Chevy Chase Dermatology, LLC | Dr. Margaret Sommerville



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Question: What procedure gives your patients the best results with the least downtime after just a single treatment?

Answer: Without a doubt Botox or Dysport injections meet those criteria. Such injections soften or erase frown lines, crow's feet, and horizontal forehead lines. At the same time, in most patients, I can accomplish a gentle but noticeable brow lift and give their eyes a youthful, rested, more open appearance. This is why Botox and Dysport treatments have become the most sought after cosmetic procedures in aesthetic medicine. Many of my patients request Botox injections before weddings, reunions, major presentations, or award ceremonies.

One of my clients, a CEO of a large pharmaceutical company told me that ever since she began receiving Botox injections, she has experienced more business success thanks to altering her facial expression and giving her face a "gentler, un-frowned, relaxed and more approachable" look. I think that it is important to get to know your patients, their professional backgrounds, and carefully consider their goals and expectations. I always ask my trial lawyer clients whether they have any upcoming trials. I want them to retain full ability to frown and look concerned when arguing cases. I can still inject their crow's feet or offer a filler injection, but I will avoid glabellar (frown line) treatment until after the trial is concluded.

I think that the greatest myth about Botox or Dysport injections is that you have to look frozen and unnatural afterwards. This is absolutely untrue as with skill and experience, one can aim to inject the patient in such a way as to retain enough muscle movement and facial expression to accomplish a youthful but completely natural look.

Question: After practicing cosmetic dermatology for 15 years, what surprises you the most during the initial cosmetic consultations with your clients?

Answer: It is all too frequent to meet a new client at my office for a cosmetic consultation who despite having already invested thousands of dollars into anti-aging procedures and products elsewhere, still believes that SPF 8 or even SPF 15 contained in her foundation is all the sun protections that is needed. As to topical retinoids, widely considered to be the most effective anti-aging agents, many times I am told that they have either never been introduced, or were discontinued after a week or two due to "irritation". The fact is that with proper guidance and customization of treatment protocol, almost everyone can tolerate retinoid applications. It takes time to explain this to patients, but it is our responsibility to take the time to educate our clients.

I take a holistic approach to aging prevention and skincare. It is not all about procedures. Prevention is so important. I recommend regular sunblock use, preferably SPF 30 or higher with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. In terms of anti-aging skincare, nothing comes close to the pro-collagen effects of prescription-strength retinoids such as Retin A, Refissa, Renova, Tazorac, and others.