

Buzz Behind Stem Cell Facelifts

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A "stem cell facelift" may cause many to roll their eyes and turn their heads. But if people knew that this specific facelift procedure harvested your own stem cells from the fatty tissue in your body and required zero cutting or stitching, it wouldn't be causing so many to raise their eyebrows. And not surgically, for that matter.



Stem cell facelifts are the latest buzz word invented by the media, according to Jeffrey Ptak, a board-certified plastic surgeon who's been practicing in Scottsdale for 25 years. It's important to note that these are not fetal stem cells but your own body's stem cells. A stem cell facelift is essentially fat transfer to the face where a percentage of the fat would be stem cells. In many cases, a facelift translates to a face that has been literally lifted, showing noticeably tighter, higher skin. With this newer and more advanced type of facelift, there is only rebuilding of the depth to one's face. "We use patient's own body fat and build the youthful shape of the face by enhancing depth," Ptak said. "The fat transfer addresses the third dimension of the face which makes you look younger as opposed to just having tighter skin."

If you were to harvest fat from the tummy, waist or upper thigh, about two percent of that fat would be pure stem cells, according to Dr. Ptak. "These stem cells are creating new metabolic processes," Ptak said. "Stem cells are active and help the overall quality of the face. They increase blood flow and dermal collagen." It sounds too good to be true, but the best part is that it's completely knife-free. You begin with micro liposuction where the fat is harvested from your own body. The fat is then automatically liquefied and injected through tiny needles into fat compartments in the face. You're in and out on the same day as the procedure with virtually no noticeable affects. This can be especially important for men who are seeking something more subtle than a drastic facelift. Dr. Ptak notes that this can be done in baby steps so the youthful affects are more gradual and not as apparent.

"I'm totally against the sensational, reality TV surgical makeover. No one wants to walk into a room and have someone say, 'Who are you?'" Ptak said. Ptak recommends doing as much research and asking as many questions as possible in order to get the results that you're looking for from a doctor. "When it comes to facial surgery, you should be able to get results that you want without mortgaging the house and without a lot of risk or downtime," Ptak said. Doctor-to-doctor referrals are also a great way to find the best services possible, and you can find doctor referrals at www.surgery.org and www.plasticsurgery.org.