

Non-invasive newcomer making waves

Ultherapy treatments the latest to take aim at loose skin between the chin and neck. Story Trina Rehberg

YOU MAY NOT HAVE HEARD ABOUT ULTHERAPY YET, BUT YOU WILL SOON.

The non-invasive procedure is the latest to target extra skin between the chin and neck, not-so-affectionately dubbed the double chin or turkey neck.

Ultherapy uses ultrasound waves to heat the dermis layer below the skin's surface without cutting or disrupting the surface of the skin. This then causes the dermis to react by producing more collagen and tighter new skin cells.

Over a course of treatments, the new cells will replace old ones to give the skin a fresher look. The extra collagen will also provide more skin support, smoothing out wrinkles.

Unlike Thermage — which uses radio-frequency technology to heat the inner layers of the skin — Ultherapy does not create the same short-term redness. In rare cases, some patients have reported redness, which typically goes away on its own within a few hours.

"It allows you to totally spare the surface of the skin

and target the ultrasound beams down into the tissue underneath the skin," says Dr. Kristina Zakhary, a facial cosmetic surgeon in Calgary.

"You can see and pinpoint the layers you want to treat."

The procedure takes one hour and results are often immediately noticeable. Patients typically notice results in less than three months.

While results — which typically last up to a year — have been positive, there are few long-term studies available.

In addition to some patients reporting mild redness and tenderness in the area where the treatment was performed, other potential side-effects include bruising and swelling.

"Whenever you're dealing with something non-invasive, you have to take into account that the results are going to be much more subtle than surgical results," says Zakhary.

"You can't really expect a facelift with a laser or

ultrasound therapy, but you will notice a difference."

Ultherapy, also known as Ulthera, was approved by Health Canada in May 2009, and by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in September 2009.

Since then, it's been featured on shows like the Dr. Oz Show and performed at clinics in Europe, the United States and Canada.

Toronto-based Dr. Sandy J. Pritchard was one of the first in Canada to offer the treatment.

Before switching to Ulthera, Pritchard's office did Thermage treatments.

"We started offering Ulthera because we wanted a better non-surgical tightening system," says Deborah Elias, nurse manager at Pritchard's office, adding that they've been seeing results as early as nine weeks.

"We have a fair number of people who come here to have it done."



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