

Here's What to Consider Before Getting Botox in Your 20s

Remember when anti-aging meant only night cream and SPF? How quaint. Today, those of us serious about evading lines and wrinkles are calling in the big guns: our doctors. New York City dermatologist Dendy Engelman says 65 percent of her patients are between 20 and 35 and add that millennials who come for other reasons such as acne, psoriasis, or eczema, often also inquire about injectables and lasers. Paul Jarrod Frank, a New York City dermatologist, calls the thirties a time when sun damage slowly surfaces, he says, and “people begin to realize youth is not forever.” The goal for this group? Arrest burgeoning lines and spots, and bank skin-plumping collagen by any means possible. And as it turns out, that’s not actually being overly Type A. “Young skin responds more rapidly to collagen stimulation via lasers and needles,” notes Miami-based dermatologist Joely Kaufman. Here’s a look at some of the ways top experts are aiming to age-proof the millennial face.

1. The Ingredients You Need: Products alone won’t work miracles for, say, your Baby Boomer boss, but “on a 25-year-old just starting to see the changes of time, daily sunscreen and a good **antioxidant moisturizer** can have a dramatic healing effect and help improve the quality of the skin,” says Frank. At night, work a powerhouse product into your skin with ingredients like **retinol**, peptides, growth factors, or stem cells to “stimulate collagen growth while cells are still young and efficient,” Bowe tells *Allure*. “That way, when collagen synthesis drops off in your thirties, you have reserves built up.” Also good to note? The natural rate of exfoliation also slows around 30. Swiping a **glycolic peel pad** over your face twice a week “encourages new cells to travel to the surface, keeping skin fresh and bright,” she adds.

2. The Collagen-Boosting Devices to Try: “When 20somethings come to me for anti-aging, I guide them toward fixes that make a long-term difference like the Clear and Brilliant, a low-energy Fraxel resurfacing laser that gets rid of early sun damage and stimulates collagen renewal,” says Frank. Most complexions need a few rounds for primo results but even a single session will make skin healthier and more resilient. For about half the cash, **microneedling** can give a similar payoff without heat, making it a safer choice for those with **melasma** or skin of color. “I’ve worked on 19-year-olds who grew up on the West Coast and had major sun damage at a very young age,” says Mashell Tabe, a medical aesthetician in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who follows needling sessions with vitamin infusions to further ramp up collagen. Clients exit her chair looking extra-plump and glowy; with regular treatments, they see “a more refined texture and tone” within three to six months, she says. If your particular brand of sun damage runs deeper—less mottling and pores, more hints of volume loss and sagging—tissue-tightening devices can help. “I have many young patients getting radio frequency-based Forma treatments twice a year,” says Karyn Grossman, a dermatologist with offices in Santa Monica and New York City. “If we keep that collagen machine cranking and the skin stays thick, you’re absolutely going to age more slowly.”

3. The Botox (and Its Cousins) to Think About: More than half a million 19- to 35-year-olds got **botulinum toxin injections** in 2015, according to the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. In these cases, derms typically use toxins sparingly across the upper face to keep frown lines, forehead furrows, and crow’s feet from setting in. “Within two minutes of talking to someone, I can see if she’s a frowner, a brow raiser, a squinter-smiler, and that tells me which area is at the highest risk of getting permanently etched-in lines,” explains Bowe. “I’ll use the heaviest dose there, and then go really lightly in other areas to train those muscles not to over-express.” And here’s something interesting: Of the three brands of neuromodulators on the market—Botox, Dysport, and Xeomin—the latter two are chemically engineered to “soften wrinkles while keeping the muscles somewhat mobile,” says Frank, making them more suitable for those who don’t yet need, for lack of a better description, a frozen face. Do hold off until you have at least faint lines, though: Botox does nothing on smooth, unlined skin. “You’ll save a lot of time and money, and build less resistance to the drug over time,” says Grossman.

4. And Fillers, Too: Maybe you thought the whole my-face-has-fallen-and-it-can't-get-up phenomenon was more of a #fortysomethingproblem, but according to Engelman, we can start losing volume in our cheeks in our late twenties. However, she adds, “injecting tiny amounts of **hyaluronic acid** [HA] early on supports the structure of the face and combats gravity.” And while HA fillers, like Restylane and Juvederm, do degrade slowly over time (usually within a year), studies show they can also trigger collagen formation for long-term gains. What’s more, says Engelman, “they bind water, hydrating skin from within, which is huge for younger patients looking to keep their dewy glow,” says Engelman. For some, the **under-eye area** benefits from early intervention. “I treat patients in their twenties who’ve inherited premature bags or hollows,” says Grossman. “We get better, more lasting results under the eyes when the skin is still thick—you don’t want to wait until you’re forty for this.” Injecting a young face requires an especially skilled and judicious hand, notes Kaufman, since overfilling can “throw off one’s natural aesthetic balance, making her look much older.” And as always (really, this should go without saying), choose your dermatologist wisely.