



Beauty

On the bright side



Megan Bedford has the go-to glossary for the latest facial treatments to refresh and brighten your appearance.

If you're putting in the effort with good skincare practices but not getting the results you're after, it can be a good idea to speak with an expert. The options available at skin clinics throughout New Zealand run the gamut from a one-off facial to brighten your skin, to more advanced appearance medicine options designed to address some of the common signs of ageing. However, deciphering treatment menus from skincare clinics can be intimidating and overwhelming! A reputable practitioner will take plenty of time to talk through any options with you, but it helps to have an idea of what's available and the outcomes you might be hoping to achieve. With new trends and technology continually advancing in terms of what's possible, we look at some of the most popular options.

FILLERS

Injectable gel fillers were once only used to plump out significant lines around the forehead, eyes and mouth. These days it's more about boosting volume loss that happens naturally with age. Using the hyaluronic acid solution, which dissolves over six to 12 months, fillers boost lips and cheekbones, soften hollows under the eyes, strengthen the bridge of the nose and firm the jawline. Extensive use is sometimes referred to as a "liquid facelift", designed to lift and firm the face.

DERMAL NEEDLING

Also known as dermal rolling or collagen induction therapy, dermal needling works by harnessing the skin's natural ability to repair itself. A roller or small pen-like device with a number of tiny needles inside is used to gently make a series of tiny pricks (micro injuries) into the dermis, or secondary layer of skin. This causes cells to produce more collagen and elastin, the foundation of smoother, firmer and brighter skin. It can help minimise acne scarring and is handy for areas like fine lines around the lips.

IPL

Patchy pigmentation, sun damage, broken capillaries and brown spots can be treated with IPL (Intense Pulsed Light), a concentrated light source delivered to the area of damage beneath the skin via a handpiece, without breaking the skin's surface. The pulses of light break down the pigment, which diminishes over time. It's also used to permanently remove unwanted hair. Several treatments are usually required and should be performed in autumn/winter, when it's easier to avoid sun exposure.

VAMPIRE FACIAL

The moniker "vampire facial" refers to PRP or Platelet Rich Plasma treatment, or using some of your blood's own healing plasma in combination with dermal filler to rejuvenate →





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skin. Drawn from your arm and separated by centrifuge, the plasma is delivered by needle or a needled Derma Gun. It's long been used to treat damaged tissue after injury and Dr Catherine Stone at The Face Place has also been using it to treat hair loss and sexual rejuvenation for both women and men.

LASER

The option that excites skin experts the most, because of its ability to achieve more youthful skin on the whole, is laser treatment. That means smoother, stronger and more evenly coloured skin. The key to good results is a quality laser operated by an expert in this field. Like dermal needling, the results happen beneath the surface as the skin is stimulated to repair the microscopic treatment zones created by the laser. Skin looks better in the short and long term as more collagen is produced. Traditional lasers directly target the surface layer of the skin, while more advanced fractional lasers, considered the gold standard in the industry, diffuse the burst of energy into a grid of much smaller "pinpricks" that work on a far deeper level for more effective results.

THE COST OF BEAUTY

Treatments such as those covered here are a pricey commitment, with some costing hundreds of dollars for a one-off. When the consultant mentions that the best results come from a course of visits, it's enough to leave a lump in your throat. But if being happy with the state of your skin and addressing issues that have long bothered you is a priority, it's useful to know many clinics now offer treatment plans where the cost is divided into payments throughout the year, some the equivalent of the cost of a cup of coffee a day. One-off facial treatments like sonophoresis, radio frequency, microdermabrasion and peels can have a big impact from around \$100 per session. Tweaks like Botox and fillers vary hugely in cost – they start from \$150 but can extend to more than \$1000, depending on the amount of product used and the area, or number of areas, treated. For gold-standard treatments, such as PRP and fractional laser, you should expect to pay from \$800-\$1000+ per session.

MICRODERMABRASION

Microdermabrasion is one of the quickest ways to achieve a brighter complexion. It involves removing the gunked-up top layer of dead skin with a vacuum handpiece that uses small crystals to exfoliate. It's especially good for thick, oily, blackhead-prone skin, but isn't ideal for more sensitive types as it is abrasive, so increasingly alpha hydroxy facials or "peels" using acids derived from fruit are being used for resurfacing instead.

SONOPHORESIS

Low-frequency sound waves are delivered via a flat metal handpiece that is moved over the face in conjunction with skin-boosting serums – in short, it takes a facial to the next level, with vibrations proven to help ingredients penetrate deeper into the skin.

BOTOX

Botox is an injectable medicine used to relax lines by temporarily immobilising the muscle beneath the skin. The effects wear off over several months. Long lauded for its impact on the face, Botox is now being used in more varied ways. Lifting the brow line, treating excessive sweating, migraines and teeth grinding, slimming the jawline and relaxing a gummy smile are all Botox treatments carried out in New Zealand.

PEELS

While they sound intense, topically applied treatment peels help your skin do what it does naturally, but better. That means removing the dead, dull top layer of skin to reveal bright new skin beneath and bring healthy cells to the surface – a natural process that slows as we age. Usually applied as a mask during a facial, peels can aid in increased collagen production, and improve the efficacy of your current skincare routine.

RADIO FREQUENCY

A lesser-known but useful way to tighten slack skin on the face and neck without surgery is radio frequency treatment. Using a metal conductor, it's administered through the skin to gently heat tissue and stimulate collagen in the deeper dermal layers and tighten it from the inside out. **AWW**