



Best Botox Alternatives

[Lauren Sherman](#), 04.27.07, 12:01 AM ET



By now you've heard the news: Nothing's better than Botox when it comes to temporarily reducing wrinkles. With a few quick injections of the substance, that deep line between the brows, those stubborn crows feet and even heavy laugh lines, can be entirely eliminated.

It's so good that 4.1 million Botox procedures were performed last year, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. That's nearly an 8% increase from 2005.

In Pictures: [Best Botox Alternatives](#)

It's certainly got the vote of Dr. Greg Wiener, a Chicago-based surgeon who specializes in cosmetic and reconstructive plastic surgery. He injects patients with Botox, a substance derived from botulinum toxin, an average of 10 times a week.

"Botox works so well because it paralyzes the muscle," he says. "When you're doing other injectables, [like [Restylane](#) and [collagen](#)], they don't work that way. You're putting something beneath the wrinkle to flatten it out."

But don't write off those fillers just yet.

Such techniques, which work well at lip plumping and filling in smile lines, as well as many technologically advanced skin creams, have a place on your face,

dermatologists say. Many even offer benefits Botox doesn't. Some fillers, for example, last longer than Botox while reducing deep wrinkles and crows feet.

"The biggest fallacy is that there is really one magic ingredient," says New York City-based dermatologist Dr. Dennis Gross, whose MD Skincare range includes line softeners like [hyaluronic acid](#), vitamin C and retinol.

Bad-Talking Botox

Though Botox has its fans, others take issue with that fact that it masks the problem, rather than improving it.

Navin Geria, vice president of research and development for the Spa Dermaceutical Products Group, a New Jersey-based consumer product development company that specializes in custom development of anti-aging skincare and products for dermatologists and spa chains, says that a new range of anti-aging technology called cosmeceuticals (cosmetics that companies says possess drug-like affects) will go a step further. Over a period of time, he says, they will visibly reduce wrinkles and prevent future wear and tear.

This includes [DNA nanotechnology](#) and [stem cell technology](#).

In its European markets, for example, cosmetic company Juneva of Switzerland sells a product called DNA Skin Optimizer Fluid, which promises to help aging skin cells to renew and duplicate themselves by targeting the nuclei--Juneva says skin takes on a fresher, smoother appearance within days of use. The fluid was developed in conjunction with Laboratoire des Substituts Cutanés in Lyon, France in 2004. There is no set date for U.S. release so if you want this wrinkle zapper, you'd better book a flight across the pond.

The fruits of stem cell technology, on the other hand, can be found at Bloomingdale's. [Amatokin](#), which retails for \$173 for 1 ounce, is said to target stem cells, and in doing so claims to renew old skin, reduce wrinkles and even out tone.

Other alternatives are not as pricey.

Cheaper Choices

Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHAs), including glycolic and lactic acids, have been the basis for chemical peels and potions for years, and can be found in formulas costing less than \$100. They slough away old skin cells, revealing more youthful-looking skin and reducing the look of wrinkles. And vitamin C, which only several years ago became available in topical form, is also used to heal sun-damaged skin. And vitamin C, which only became available in topical form in the early part of this decade, is used to heal sun-damaged skin. It, too, is being used in brands available at drugstores.

Still, Botox gets the nod from many familiar with the market's smorgasbord of wrinkle reducers.

"There are products that will make the skin look younger and firmer, and it can happen but not overnight," says Wendy Lewis, a beauty industry consultant. "And there really is no other injection that does what Botox does."

Other experts say your best bet is a two-fold approach. Gross advocates using multiple products with a meaningful concentration of active ingredients.

"Even people getting injected should be doing this," he says. "Botox is just a Band-Aid--these products are targeting the reason for collagen breakdown."