

AGING

What Gives Away Aging?



Gail Humble, M.D.

How many times have you seen a woman with beautiful skin, free from wrinkles or blemishes and yet you could still tell she was in her later years. In the same sense, I'm sure many of you have seen a person with sun damaged skin, premature wrinkles and yet you can still tell that person is youthful. What is it exactly about a person's appearance that places them into a certain decade of their life? More importantly, how is it that once in awhile we are completely fooled? What are the characteristics that give away our age?

There are several things that age us. The first of these is our skin. As we age, we have deepening of natural lines of our face. An example is our nasolabial lines (the lines from the corner of the nose to the mouth). In addition, we have new lines form. In

our forties we develop marionette lines (the lines from the corner of our mouth down to the sides of our chin). We develop frown lines and crows feet. All of these lines are a result of repetitive facial movement.

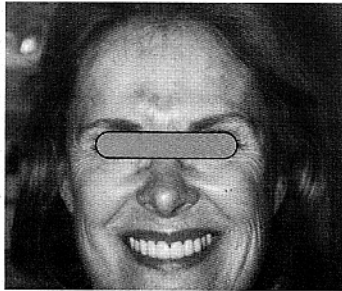
Other wrinkles also form. Fine lines start forming under our eyes and from on the sides of our cheeks. Eventually we even develop sleep lines and other lines that are a result of redundant skin.

Wrinkles are not the entire story when it comes to the skin. As we age, our skin loses tone and elasticity. Our pores appear larger and our skin becomes looser. The distances between the features on our face become greater. As our skin becomes lax on our forehead, our brows drop. The area under our eyes to the bottom of our orbital rim extends, as does the distance from the base of our nose to our upper lips.

The pigment in our skin becomes mottled as we develop areas that are

darker as well as lighter. Depending on the amount of our sun exposure, we develop sunspots, or age spots. In the twenties and thirties, women in particular can develop areas of hyperpigmentation across their cheeks and forehead. By the forties, the skin on the upper lip and chin will begin to darken. Of course, those predisposed will have a continued darkening under the eyes.

The consistency and texture of the skin changes as we age. The skin becomes less refined and does not



Before



After

reflect light in the same way. We interpret this as a dulling of the complexion. We lose some of the rosy glow we had when we were younger, and yet we develop more visible vessels in the skin. This is especially noticeable around the nasal area. With time, more broken capillaries become visible across the cheek area as well.

It is important to remember the skin of our entire body also goes through many of these changes. The skin on the neck and hands can particularly give away one's age.

The second factor, which allows us to determine one's age, is fat distribution. As we age, we deepen the hollows in our cheeks. This is because the fat pads of our cheeks begin to slip down and our cheeks drop. The fat below our eyes may begin to protrude, causing bags to form under our eyes. The fat above our eyes also begins to protrude, causing heaviness above our upper lids. Fat distribution also changes on our neck and often

aids in the formation of jowles and a double chin. Unfortunately, while we may have fat drop and the volume decrease in our face, we often add it in greater quantities to the rest of our bodies. In addition to accumulating more fat on the rest of our body, the appearance of the fat changes. Because our collagen becomes more lax, our fat may bulge in between the septa of our skin. We know this less-than-desirable look as cellulite.

Finally, our posture is an important determinant of our visual age. We all tend to hunch forward and this adds to perceived loss in height. In addition, there is a true loss in one's stature with age. The spine shortens, as the vertebral disks

become thinner. As the spine in our back shortens, it adds to the width of one's waistline.

So, with all of these factors considered in conjunction, we can often age a person quite accurately. The benefit of knowing these facts, while depressing, is that we can do many things to correct the majority of them. Understanding the aging process helps one evaluate their own "visual age" and will assist you in deciding which treatment is most beneficial for you.

Dr. Humble's office specializes in only non-surgical cosmetic procedures. Because of the advances technologically today, we can address each one of these aging "signs" without surgery.

Dr. Humble is an advocate of Botox and uses it for not only cosmetic purposes, but also uses it to treat headache and hyperhidrosis. Botox is

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quite harmless and allows us to soften the muscle that is responsible for causing certain of our facial wrinkles as well as wrinkles on our neck.

We also have a variety of soft tissue augmentors that are available for use today. Most people already know about Collagen, but there have been many new additions to this field in the last six months. Now there is Dermologen, Fascian, and Cymetra. Polylactic Acid, Hyaluronic Acid and Artecoll will be available soon. Some of these soft tissue augmentors have a short duration. This is appropriate for those people that want to try something new, but don't want a long term commitment. Others offer substitute that are long lasting and even permanent. Soft tissue augmentors are done through injection and can help soften lines and resculpt the face.

New laser advances have greatly influenced what we are capable of accomplishing without surgery. The NLite laser is one of these advances. Dr. Humble is one of the few physicians in the area trained to use this laser. This laser stimulates the patient's own Collagen production which reduces the depth of their wrinkles. Scars work without resurfacing, so there is no down time and absolutely no discomfort

Using any of these modalities alone or in combination, we are able to take a minimum of five years off a person's face. Most people have busy schedules and hectic lives and can't afford the time or the monetary commitment to surgery. Until they are ready for surgery, it is nice for them to know there are other alternative available to them.

Gail M. Humble, MD is the medical director of the Blue Pacific Aesthetic Medical Group and is located in Hermosa Beach. Her office staff can be reached at 310-374-0347.

Dr. Humble is author of the soon to be published book, *Looking Your Best Without Surgery*, a home guide reference of what is available today and tomorrow in the field of cosmetic medicine.