

Oil and Implants Don't Mix

Soybean-oil breast implants—believed to be a more natural-feeling alternative to saline—won't ever make it to the market in the U.S., despite the fact that they've been widely available in Europe. Only a small percentage of the more than 5,000 women who participated in international soybean-oil implant trials over the past three years reported torn, leaking implants. But instead of the oil being absorbed into—and excreted from—the body after a tear, as expected, it triggered swelling, inflammation of the breast tissue, and the appearance of a strange, milky fluid (a reaction of the body to the soybean oil) in the breast cavity. "The interaction between implant-filler materials and body fluids is more complex than we thought," says Minneapolis plastic surgeon Bruce Cunningham, who has led many implant studies. Although none of the women in the study were harmed by the implants, the manufacturer Lipomatrix stopped making them as a precautionary measure," explains St. Louis plastic surgeon Leroy Young, one of the implant's inventors. Until a better one is developed, saline implants, right, remain the most widely used.



Drops for Droop

One of the most feared side effects of Botox is eyelid droop, or ptosis—which occurs when the botulinum toxin accidentally spreads to the eyelid muscles, weakening them for up to a month. The cure used to be lopicone, prescription eye drops that may blur vision, but now there's a simpler and more effective fix: over-the-counter antihistamine eye drops. "These antihistamine drops are safely used all the time by fashion models to get rid of redness and itchiness and to widen their eyes 15 minutes before photography," says Miami oculoplastic surgeon Steven Fagien. The drops—which go by the names Naphcon-A, Opcon-A, and Vasocon-A (all under \$10)—cure eyelid droop within an hour. "After using the drops, the eyelid muscles responsible for the droop contract, raising the lid," explains Fagien. Since antihistamines can speed up the pulse, anyone with heart disease should consult her doctor before using them.



A lazy eyelid, right, is one possible side effect of forehead Botox.

Good Vibrations?

In the beginning, there were thong bikinis. Then there was cellulite anxiety. Then came liposuction, so-called cellulite-erasing pills and creams, and a vacuum-like massage system called Endermologie. Now there's MD2000, a massage device—designed for doctors—with a vibrating hand-held wand to increase circulation and smooth the skin.

THE CLAIMS: The device's vibrations help break up connecting fibers under the skin that cause cellulite, according to the manufacturer, Symedex Medical Aesthetic Solutions of Minneapolis. The device may also speed post liposuction healing because it boosts circulation, which helps reduce swelling.

PROOF THAT IT WORKS: Anecdotal evidence shows that MD2000 works post-liposuction, but there's no scientific proof yet that it-or anything—works permanently on cellulite. Clinical trials for cellulite are planned at the University of Georgia in Augusta.

SIDE EFFECTS: Unlike Endermologie, it's used on bare skin, a factor that may contribute to redness and minor skin irritation.

LENGTH OF TREATMENT: 12 to 18 sessions of 45 minutes each.

COST: \$60 to \$100 per session.

The Lipo Advantage

Liposuction for overweight women may make them healthier as well as thinner. That's the finding of a small study recently presented at the American Society of Plastic Surgeon's annual conference, held in New Orleans. The 14 women who participated all weighed 15 to 30 percent more than their ideal weight and had undergone large-volume

liposuction on various areas of their body. According to lead researcher, plastic surgeon **Sharon Giese**, these women not only lost weight, they also lowered their blood pressure and insulin level, a risk factor for diabetes. If the health benefits are sustained long-term, she says, "liposuction may well prove to be a weight-loss option for overweight people."

Bargain-Basement Botox

Botox for \$99—advertised nationwide— isn't such a bargain. Ordinarily the wrinkle-erasing toxin is diluted with saline solution before it's injected. Some doctors, though, dilute it more than others to make a bottle last longer, thus costing them less. According to Los Angeles dermatologist Ronald Moy, "The more diluted the Botox, the slower it is to take effect, and the faster it wears off, requiring more frequent visits in the long run."