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synthetic microspheres and purified bovine collagen and requires testing for allergic reaction before treatment. But ArteFill can produce lumpiness, which the patient would have to live with for a long time.

"If you get a result you don't like, it's not good that something lasts forever," says Dr. Jonathan Pontell, a plastic surgeon based in Malvern.

Pontell says Restylane has quickly surpassed collagen as a filler of choice for patients—mostly women in their 20s and 30s who want to enhance their lips. "Thanks to Angelina Jolie, full lips are in," he says.

Fillers tend not to last as long around the mouth—perhaps six to eight months—because the area is always moving. But Pontell says it's a vast improvement over traditional collagen injections, which melted away after three months. He and other plastic surgeons also frequently use fillers in conjunction with other treatments, such as brow and face-lifts, as well as Botox, which makes wrinkles disappear by temporarily paralyzing the underlying muscles.

Another recent European import doesn't require a doctor's prescription. Mexoryl is an important scientific advance in the battle against both aging and skin cancer. Available over the counter abroad and in Canada since 1993, Mexoryl obtained the FDA's stamp of approval several months ago and will be marketed by L'Oréal.

The chemical is highly effective in blocking the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays and has been incorporated into lotions with an SPF of 60. And applying a good sun block is always an important step in maintaining youthful skin.

"Every morning after you wash your face, some sort of sunscreen should be going on," says Pontell. "It's not just something you do when you go to the beach."

On the horizon is at least one product that could provide far longer-lasting improvements than traditional facial fillers. In the United States, Sculptra has been approved for treatment of HIV patients to counteract lipodystrophy, the gaunt appearance that results from the loss of facial fat. In Europe, Australia and Brazil, Sculptra is most often used to plump out facial folds to restore a youthful appearance.

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Juvederm, which went on the American market in January, is incorporated into a malleable, smooth gel that flows easily into the skin. All other FDA-approved hyaluronic acid dermal fillers are delivered via a gel particle suspension formula.

The product offers an array of applications, which makes it a good choice for a variety of patients. "I've injected Juvederm in an 18-year-old who wanted to enhance her lips and an 80-year-old who was not a good candidate for surgery but wanted to look more youthful," Davis says. "You can use this product to fill out a hollow. You can even create somewhat of a facelift effect by injecting it below the cheek line, like building a little scaffold."

Although surgery remains a popular option, fillers are gaining popularity with women in their 40s and 50s who want to look refreshed without going under the knife. "The key words here are minimally invasive," he says.

Although the procedures don't require a recovery time, there is an "ouch" factor, says Dr. Kirk Brandow, who also practices in Bala Cynwyd. Because Juvederm is a thinner product, he can inject it into the lips using only a topical cream to numb the pain. Restylane causes more pain because it's thicker and more viscous, so doctors typically administer a nerve block that makes it difficult to speak for an hour or two. "People who want to look more youthful say it's worth a little discomfort," he says. "These products are extremely rejuvenating. Lipstick goes on smoother when there are no bleed lines around the lips. Squint lines go away."

So, what's the cost of beauty? Juvederm and Restylane are comparatively priced at \$300-\$600 per tube. A patient who is getting a major boost—which could require up to four tubes—would be spending a pretty penny. The upside is that the treatment would be good for up to a year.

Just on the market, ArteFill differs from other injectable wrinkle fillers in that the body does not absorb it, offering a long-term solution for wrinkles. The filler is a gel that contains

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SOMETHING TO SMILE ABOUT: Dr. Steven Davis of Bala Cynwyd says facial fillers are a good choice for a variety of patients.

From Europe with Love

The latest cosmetic treatments to ripple across the pond. *By Eileen Smith Dallabrida*

Smooth cheeks, full lips and furrow-free brows—all with no waiting. And the only pointy thing involved is a fine-gauge needle rather than a scalpel, meaning patients promptly walk out of the office and back into their daily lives.

"It's before and after in a box," says Dr. Steven Davis, a cosmetic surgeon with offices in Bala Cynwyd.

Popular for almost a decade in Europe and newly approved in the United States, facial fillers are injections that fill out uneven, depressed or wrinkled areas in the skin. Brand names include ArteFill, Juvederm, Radiesse, Restylane and Sculptra. Unlike fat transplants, in which fat is removed from elsewhere in the body, gently cleaned and injected into the face, fillers require little or no recovery time.

"They have been around awhile," Davis says.

"But with the FDA and their very high standards, it takes a lot longer to get approved here in the United States."

The primary ingredient in Restylane and Juvederm, the two most widely available fillers, comes from Mother Nature. Hyaluronic acid is a biodegradable complex sugar found in all living organisms. Because it's a naturally occurring substance, doctors don't have to administer skin tests before they inject it.

Hyaluronic acid's function is to create volume and elasticity in the skin, absorbing as much as 1,000 times its own weight in water to generate a moist, fresh appearance. But the body's own production declines over time and most people begin to develop fine lines in their faces in their 30s, the result of sagging cells or muscular activities such as smiling, squinting or smoking. The lines that

poly-L-lactic acid, which stimulates the lower layers of the skin to produce more collagen.

Unlike other fillers, improvement isn't immediate. Sculptra can require three to five treatments every four to six weeks and improvement occurs gradu-

ally over two to six months. That's a plus for people who tend to be shy about letting people know they're undergoing a change or improvement.

But Brandow says the product is problematic because it can produce granulomas, small nodules that create unsightly

bumps. It's also expensive, compared to other procedures.

"It takes a lot of it, and you have to spend \$3,000 to get a minimal result," he says. "You could do a fat transplant for the same price and get excellent results." **201**

THE LATEST IMPORTS

ArteFill: Approved as Atrecoil in Europe in 1993, this facial filler is composed of polymethylmethacrylate, lidocaine, and bovine collagen. Proponents say it can eliminate unsightly lines and wrinkles for years. Recently approved by the FDA to treat deep naso-labial folds. ArteFill also is used to fill in pockmarks and depressions under the eyes. **Benefits:** Long-lasting and possibly permanent results.

Side effects: Lumpiness, tenderness, redness. **Cost:** \$500-\$700 per syringe.

Juvederm: New to the U.S. market, this smooth gel, non-animal dermal filler offers a natural look and feel and lasts for six months or longer due to higher concentrations of hyaluronic acid. **Benefits:** Immediate results and smoother injection. **Side effects:** Redness, tenderness at injection site. **Cost:** \$300-\$600 per tube.

Mexoryl: Available in Europe and Canada since 1993, this chemical is the most effective ultraviolet filtering ingredient available in sunscreens. Just approved in the United States, Mexoryl is patented by L'Oréal. **Benefits:** Blocks harmful UVA rays.

Side effects: Redness for people suffering from acne, eczema and other skin conditions. **Cost:** \$10 and up.

Restylane: This wrinkle-smoothing facial injection is derived from hyaluronic acid, which can be injected like collagen but typically lasts twice as long. **Benefits:** Immediate improvement. **Side effects:** Slight bruising and redness at injection site. **Cost:** \$300-\$600 per syringe.

Sculptra: First approved for HIV patients to restore facial fat, Sculptra works over time to encourage the body to produce collagen. **Benefits:** Takes effect gradually and lasts up to two years. **Side effects:** Granulomas, tenderness and redness at injection site. **Cost:** \$450-\$550 per syringe.

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