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PADDOCK PUBLI

A slew of injectable drugs can help turn back the clock

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In the war against wrinkles, thinning lips, saggy jowls and other unsightly signs of aging, the weapon of choice increasingly comes in a syringe.

Injectables are finding their way into more faces, as beauty-conscious consumers are lured by the promise of a quick fix with relatively low risk and little recovery time.

"I regard myself as a surgeon, and I hardly do any surgery these days because I can do so much with Botox and fillers and other procedures," said Dr. Alastair Carruthers, the Vancouver dermatologist who, along with his physician wife, helped uncover Botox's potential as a wrinkle fighter.

Botox's booming popularity — Wall Street analysts say Americans spent more than \$400 million on the muscle-paralyzing toxin last year — has helped catapult injectables into the mainstream. Old-school standbys like collagen and fat have had to make way for competition from a gaggle of new injectables aimed at turn-

Time to take a shot?

Radiance

What it is: A powdery form of hydroxyapatite, a bone-like mineral, suspended in a gel.

What it does: A few doctors are using it as a filler to build up the cheekbones and other parts of the face and flatten deeper wrinkles, particularly those running from the nostrils to the lips and the lips to the chin.

Pros: Results last about three to five years, according to Radiance's makers, BioForm Inc. No allergy skin test necessary. Dr. Michael Byun, a Chicago plastic surgeon who's used Radiance in more than 40 patients, said it's a good alternative to cheek implants. "It's cheaper, quicker and you don't have an implant running around in your soft tissue," Byun said. "I've been very pleased with the product."

Cons: Not a lot of doctors have much experience with Radiance, and it hasn't been tested as a cosmetic filler in clinical trials. "It's possible it will turn out to be a good substance but we just don't know yet," said Dr. Rhoda Narins, a dermatologic surgeon. It doesn't work well in the more superficial layers of the skin near the eyes and on the forehead, Byun said, adding that he doesn't like to use it in the lips.

Status: The product has been approved for various medical uses, but BioForm Inc. is seeking FDA approval to market Radiance for facial restoration. Company officials said they expect a ruling within 90 days.

Cost: Between \$1,000 and \$1,500.