

Advanced Skin Tightening Technology

THE AGING FACE IS CHARACTERIZED by loss of volume due to changes in fat and underlying bone structure. When these changes are combined with the cumulative effects of gravity, excessive sun exposure, poor eating habits, and other unhealthy behaviors like smoking and immoderate use of alcohol, we see sagging skin with loss of skin tone and elasticity. These features can be most obvious in the appearance of drooping eyebrows, sagging upper and lower eyelids, deepening of nasolabial folds and marionette lines, formation of jowls along the jaw line and loose skin on the neck.

After several years of disappointing results from non-surgical skin tightening treatments (based on laser, radio frequency, and infrared energy) we now have a technology that actually appears to work with a high degree of consistency. This new approach uses sound waves to produce measurable skin tightening with only one treatment as found in nearly 90 percent of patients, and in 100 percent of patients having experienced two treatments (according to published clinical research performed at Northwestern University). This unique facial rejuvenation option is delivered by the Ulthera System.

How ultrasound tightens skin

The Ulthera System is the first and only device cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with an indication for “lift”. Ultherapy is a non-invasive, non-surgical treatment that focuses sound waves in much the same way that a magnifying lens focuses light, precisely targeting the deep supporting structures of connective tissue below the skin. The energy imparted into these tissues causes contraction of existing collagen and generation of new collagen fibers with resultant tightening and lifting of lax skin without disrupting the skin’s surface. Using a mirror after one side of the face has been treated, many patients notice immediate improvement in the treated side. Continued tightening is observed for up to 90 days after the procedure.

Is ultrasound safe?

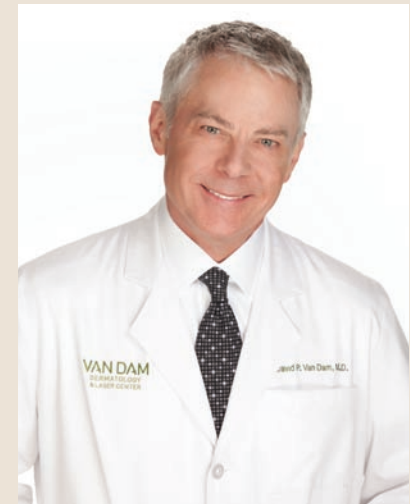
The Ulthera System uses the same ultrasound that patients and physicians have trusted for decades. The nature of focused ultrasound is that the all of the acoustic energy is benign except at the focal point where the sound waves come together. Consequently, superficial layers of skin are not affected and the deeper targeted plane gets a concentrated dose of energy. The sound waves heat the tissue with a grid-like pattern consisting of hundreds of tiny spots which in turn initiate the body’s natural regenerating response. To date, with more than 4000 procedures performed, there are no reports of permanent adverse effects.

Candidates for Ulthera skin tightening

Ultrasound skin tightening can be performed on men and women of any skin color with mild to moderate skin laxity. It can be a good treatment choice for people who are not ready for surgery or for those who wish to extend the time before a first-time or follow-up cosmetic surgery procedure. Not everyone is a good candidate for skin tightening including people with severe sun damage, extreme redundancy of skin, or excessive subcutaneous fat in the cheeks, neck or jaw line areas. Ultherapy is not performed in areas that have received filler injections during the preceding year. Smokers will not achieve optimal results from Ultherapy treatment and most but not all persons beyond 65 years of age are excluded due to age-related slowing of the collagen-regenerating process. A consultation with an Ultherapy specialist will allow identification of optimal candidates.

Ulthera recovery and results

Ultrasound skin tightening treatments can be performed without pain management but most people benefit from pain relief measures to “take the edge off” the impact of the highly energetic pulses. Ultherapy can produce a mild amount of redness that lasts 30-60 minutes but for most people there is zero downtime with return to normal activities immediately after a typical 30-45 minute treatment. While the procedure does not remove



DAVID P. VAN DAM, M.D., M.B.A., is a board-certified dermatologist practicing in Barrington since 1979. Dr. Van Dam is the founder of Versa Medi-Spa and Van Dam Dermatology an dLaser Center, accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health-care. He is a member of Allergan Inc. National Education Faculty and is an educator on Botox Cosmetic. His practice serves as a national training center for laser- and light-based therapies. Dr. Van Dam serves of the advisory board of the national magazine, *NewBeauty*. He may be reached at 847-382-5111.

excess skin, eliminate brown spots or blood vessels (there are other excellent treatments for these problems) some patients experience visible tightening of loose skin immediately.

At the time of this writing, there are two Ulthera Systems in the Chicago area: one at Northwestern University and the other here in Barrington at Van Dam Dermatology & Laser Center. 