



The Neck's Best Thing

DR. DEBORAH SARNOFF'S 3 STEP-PLAN FOR TAKING YEARS OFF YOUR NECK

by Wendy Lewis

Ask any woman approaching her 40th birthday and she is bound to have complaints about the changes she has seen south of her chin. The crisp, clean jaw lines of twenty-five year olds start to instill envy and loathing in us. We glance in the mirror and find our fingers compelled to start tugging at the slackening we see. We become obsessed with posing in photos with one gently placed hand under our jowls, desperately hoping that no one will capture that softening profile in a Facebook post that must then be untagged.

According to dermatologist Deborah Sarnoff, "I believe that best-selling author Nora Ephron speaks for most women in her book entitled, *I Feel Bad About My Neck*. I hear patients complain about how much they dislike their "turkey necks," jowls or loose skin and fat under their chin. Even Ms. Ephron admits to wearing turtlenecks to avoid drawing attention to her aging neck." Once upon a time, the only way to improve your neck was by booking yourself in for a full blown facelift. However, the development of new technology is making it easier to reduce fat deposits in your neck and tighten sagging skin with minimal discomfort and quick recovery time, and no scalpels.

As Dr. Sarnoff explains, "I now have three terrific techniques in my arsenal that I can use to improve the neck without a facelift for women over 40 who aren't ready, willing or able to undergo surgery."

FROM A TURKEY TO A SWAN

Dr. Sarnoff's first step is to address the excess fat that tends to accumulate with age in all the wrong places, including the area of the neck just under the chin, and her weapon of choice is the Smartlipo™ laser. "Laser lipolysis uses a miniature fiber optic laser introduced through a tiny pinprick to melt fat from under the chin and jowls. With a powerful wavelength of 1440 nanometers, Smartlipo can dramatically improve the appearance of your sagging neck and tighten the overlying skin in a single session. We make three small incisions – under each earlobe and one under the chin – and introduce a local anesthetic to numb the area. Then we use a fiber optic wire which is thinner than a strand of uncooked capellini. It is inserted through one of the incisions and the beam of light from the laser is attracted to the fat and water in your skin. The laser gently melts away the fat and simultaneously causes new collagen to be produced in the dermis (the undersurface of the skin) from the 'inside out.' The result is superior skin tightening which translates to a firmer, younger looking neck contour."

This amazing process yields very little trauma to the tissues, so there is minimal bruising, swelling, discomfort and downtime. After just one treatment session, which takes less than an hour, you will wear an elastic chin strap for a long weekend to keep the area protected and reduce swelling. Dr. Sarnoff also adds that "Results of this skin tightening treatment keep getting better. At three months you can see the final results of Smartlipo for the neck. In patients with elastic skin, it's a home run result." She cautions that it is not for everyone and insists that her patients have a body mass index (BMI) below 30. Even if you have just a little bit of excess loose skin in the neck or chin

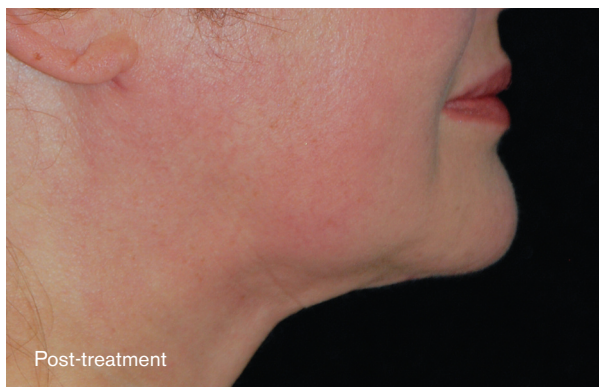
"At three months you can see the final results of Smartlipo for the neck. In patients with elastic skin, it's a home run result," says Dr. Sarnoff.

area without a lot of fat, you may still be a good candidate for treatment. The contour change is remarkable, and she does this technique on men as well as women.

IT'S ABOUT THE DOT

Dr. Sarnoff doesn't stop there with her signature "Neck-Less" techniques. She also uses a fractional carbon dioxide CO₂ laser system called the SmartXide DOT® (DEKA) to get rid of sun damage, slackening skin, and brown and red discoloration that can make your neck look old before its time. "Your face is full of sebaceous (oil) glands, but your neck is not. The skin of the neck is thinner, has little to no oil and is unforgiving, which is why it is considered a high risk zone for inexperienced practitioners." The DOT works differently than traditional deeper lasers because it is fractionated. Tiny areas of skin are vaporized, while areas of skin in between are spared. The bridges of skin that remain untouched by the DOT are the key to rapid healing because the entire epidermis is not ablated by the laser.

"The DOT is an exceptional device for tissue tightening from the 'outside in.' It is ideal for the treatment of sun damage, brown spots, fine lines, wrinkles, skin laxity/texture and acne scars. I can use this system to smooth out the crepey appearance of the neck and horizontal necklace lines that can be inherited. For people who have had a lot of sun exposure on their neck, like gardeners, tennis players, golfers and sailors, for example, the DOT laser can take care of blotchy redness, called 'poikiloderma of Civatte.' This condition is often embarrassing



60-year-old woman before and after Smartlipo with 1440 wavelength.

to patients. The central portion of the neck appears white because the chin has served as an umbrella of sorts protecting it from sunburn and photodamage. The sides of the neck are unprotected and they become very red. We can blend in the mottled skin of the neck. I even like to carry it down to get some improvement on the décolletage," she says.

Dr. Sarnoff's DOT Therapy for the neck is usually a single treatment that is performed in her Manhattan or Long Island laser clinic using a topical numbing cream. No IV sedation or general anesthesia is required so you can drive yourself home if you like. The DOT treatment takes less than half an hour. As a dermatologist and skin cancer surgeon, she is diligent about instructing her patients on aftercare and sun avoidance. Aquaphor® Healing Ointment is applied after the laser procedure, and she will insist that you stay out of the way of UV rays for at least six weeks. She adds, "sunblock with a high SPF, greater than 30, should be used forever if you want to maintain the improvement."

The true benefits of DOT Therapy is that it offers amazing results, safely and quickly with little downtime. Dr. Sarnoff's

woman to woman approach is comforting to her patients, and she offers wise guidance on how to work these treatments into your lifestyle. "Avoid zippers and wear soft clothing to avoid scratching the delicate skin of the neck while it heals. It will take about a week for the skin to re-epithelialize or stop oozing, so wear a cotton turtleneck if you need to cover it, or leave it open to heal faster. We also show our patients who have to get back to work quickly how to make a scarf out of a roll of very soft gauze to wear under their clothes to avoid any friction in the area," she says.

BOTOX® NECKLIFT

BOTOX Cosmetic® is the world's leading treatment for the muscle contraction that causes skin wrinkles, creases and crow's feet. When Botulinum toxin A is injected into facial muscles, it reduces their ability to contract, and the result is smoother, younger-appearing skin. BOTOX Cosmetic can also be used for the neck, which is considered an off-label indication.

Many thin women have visible vertical neck cords because they do not have much fat covering or camouflaging them. As Dr. Sarnoff says, "When BOTOX Cosmetic or Dysport® are injected into the platysma muscle of your neck, the cords disappear. The platysma muscle is very thin and the injection needs to be performed by a very experienced injector to get the right effect. The dosage has to be correct, and if it is injected in the wrong area or too much is used, in rare cases, it may lead to complications related to swallowing. I have my patients grimace to see where their vertical cords are, and then inject a unit or so directly into the muscle about every centimeter."

For people with thin necks, this 15 minute office treatment is like a non-surgical alternative to a necklift. Improvement in the appearance of the vertical neck cords can be seen in about a week and results last for about four months. Dr. Sarnoff adds that BOTOX Cosmetic is a perfect adjunct to DOT Laser Therapy as well as Smartlipo of the neck. It can be done the same day as either laser. "BOTOX or Dysport are the icing on the cake, says Dr. Sarnoff, to increase the longevity of the results of the laser treatments for the neck." ❖

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