

as seen in



mesotherapy explained

body

Minnesota dermatologist **Charles E Crutchfield III MD** explains mesotherapy, a treatment to help remove unwanted cellulite and fat tissue. Tara Casey reports.

What is mesotherapy?

The term mesotherapy itself is nothing more than a method of delivery of medications. It was believed that by injecting certain medications into the middle (meso) skin layer, different clinical results could be obtained. In this discussion, I will use the term mesotherapy, or lipodissolve, to discuss the treatment of unwanted cellulite and unwanted areas of adipose (fat) tissue.

Mesotherapy is a treatment where injections of differing agents (drugs, nutrients, botanicals, enzymes, and vitamins) are used to treat localized conditions. In the past, mesotherapy was used to treat a variety of conditions. As I mentioned, this discussion will tend to focus on the treatment of unwanted fat and the bumpy or cottage cheese appearance of cellulite. One of the modern proponents of mesotherapy is Dr. Patricia Rittes from Brazil. Dr. Rittes actually uses the term 'lipodissolve' for a specific type of mesotherapy that can both reduce unwanted areas of fat and smooth out bumpy skin known as cellulite.

There are many different combinations of medications used by physicians performing mesotherapy around the world; however, in our office, we tend to use one with two components, namely, phosphatidyl choline (which is actually an extract from soybeans) and an emulsifying agent known as sodium deoxycholate. Recent evidence shows that deoxycholate is probably the more important of the two agents. There are many formulations used, but this is the one we tend to use exclusively in our office due to its very low side effect profile.

What is the history of mesotherapy?

Mesotherapy has actually been used since the mid-1800s, when different agents were injected to reduce pain. In fact, in the 1930s it was used as a treatment for migraine headaches. In 1958 Dr. Pistor of France coined the term mesotherapy and was really the father of modern day mesotherapy. In 1964 the French Society of Mesotherapy was formed, and in 1987 the French Academy of Medicine recognized mesotherapy as a verified branch in French medicine. It was first introduced into the US market in 1998. More recently, it has become popular due to its exposure on the *Oprah Show*. Roberta Flack, the well-known entertainer, underwent a series of mesotherapy treatments with great success. She shared her results on the *Oprah Show* and its popularity has only grown.

What are the uses of mesotherapy?

As I mentioned earlier, it has been used for many different things, including pain reduction, headache treatments, generalized weight loss, to mollify sports' injuries, and male enhancement. Some of the more common and accepted treatments include the treatment of unwanted cellulite, body sculpting (lipodissolve for the treatment of unwanted adipose/fat) and, to a lesser extent, weight loss. Some physicians are also using it to perform a mini facelift and this is often termed as mesoglow treatments.

In our office, we use it specifically to treat unwanted areas of cellulite and unwanted pockets of adipose/fat tissue such as love handles, saddlebags, abdominal areas/tummy pouches, inner thighs, jowls, and fat under the chin and neck.

What are the benefits of mesotherapy?

One of the benefits is that, in the appropriate patient, we have had some very satisfactory results, especially when it comes to treating unwanted cellulite and unwanted areas of fat. Compared to liposuction, it is relatively inexpensive and there is relatively little down time. I should mention that mesotherapy is not for everyone and we do not achieve perfect results in 100 percent of patients, but the vast majority of our patients achieve very satisfactory results.

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How is mesotherapy actually performed?

I trained under Dr. Wasserman, a Director of the American Board of Mesotherapy, Dr. Lycka, one of the pioneers in mesotherapy and Leading Cosmetic Surgeons in Canada and, as mentioned earlier, Dr. Rittes, a pioneer in mesotherapy from Brazil. A typical treatment takes 15 to 30 minutes. The procedure consists of making multiple injections into the desired target area. We define a target area to be about the size of the palm of your hand. After the injection, there can be some tenderness, swelling, and

discomfort that may last one to two days. Usually the injections are made with a very small needle to the point where the discomfort is minimal and if the patient is anxious or concerned, we will usually apply a topical numbing cream to the skin before the procedure to increase comfort. I tell patients it usually takes four to eight treatment sessions to achieve the desired results. I also tell patients that it works in approximately 80 percent of the appropriately selected patients. I tell my patients that after

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two treatments they should definitely notice a difference. In the small percentage of patients who do not see results after two sessions, I do not encourage them to continue. Treatment sessions are spaced out optimally at two-week

intervals. A typical treatment strategy involves injections over two to three months to achieve the desired results.

What are the results?

Once again, we target only cellulite and fatty areas, but the vast majority of our patients are very pleased with the results of their treatments. The results tend to be very long lasting, at least five to ten years, if not more than that.

When appropriately selected, our patients have exceptional results indicating a significant reduction and smoothing of the skin when it comes to treating cellulite, and an overall reduction in fatty deposits. Many of my patients have told me that they have lost several inches, both in their waist and hips.

What about any adverse side effects or safety issues?

As I mentioned, there are many formulations used in mesotherapy, and it is important to know the formulation that your physician is using. We only use the very mild formula using the soy plant extracts and an emulsifier, and we do not use any agents that can cause nausea or increased heart rate. As far as some of the side effects, there certainly can be some swelling, bruising, redness, and discomfort for a few days after the procedure. Sometimes, because the medication itself produces a mild inflammatory response in the fatty tissues, which results in melting away of the fat and a lessening of the fibrous bands that pull the skin down and cause the dimpled appearance of cellulite, there can also be some minor nodules that can be felt under the skin. These harmless and painless inflammatory nodules are painless but can persist for several weeks. Mesotherapy/ lipodissolve is not for everyone. The procedure should be carefully discussed with the dermatologist before beginning any treatments.

Are there any alternatives?

With respect to the treatment of unwanted fat, liposuction has always been the gold standard, and lipodissolve/mesotherapy certainly will not replace overall liposuction, but it works well if there are certain well-defined areas that contain unwanted fat and need to be reduced. In these particular cases, lipodissolve/mesotherapy can produce significant results that can be long lasting, without any type of surgical intervention. I also



BEFORE



AFTER mesotherapy by Dr. Crutchfield



BEFORE



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know many physicians who perform liposuction and who will actually use mesotherapy afterwards to produce a smoothing effect. If the cannulae from liposuction leave linear tracks in the skin afterwards that are not cosmetically acceptable, lipodissolve can help make the final result smooth.

'A typical treatment strategy involves injections over two to three months to achieve the desired results'

Do you have any advice for patients who are interested in having lipodissolve or mesotherapy performed?

First of all, it is important to understand that lipodissolve/mesotherapy is not for everyone. The reduction of unwanted cellulite is best achieved in someone who is in good athletic shape and eating a proper and nutritious diet. It works best for patients in their 20s and 30s who are physically active. Lipodissolve is a therapy to treat unwanted areas of fat, such as love handles, saddlebags, inner thighs, abdominal tummy pouches, neck and chin jowls and unwanted fat under the chin. For patients desiring overall weight reduction, lipodissolve/mesotherapy is not a very good choice. It also will not take the place of the extensive work that can be achieved with liposuction. However, for spot areas it works exceptionally well. Lipodissolve/mesotherapy is an excellent technique if you work within these parameters. In the hands of a skilled dermatologist or plastic surgeon, using a safe and gentle formulation, it carries relatively little risk and it certainly is a technique that can produce desired results while avoiding surgery. Finally, the patient needs to feel comfortable with

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the physician and should not feel rushed into any procedure. It is always better for a patient to think about the procedure and consider their options and come back later for a treatment rather than feel pressured into receiving the treatment in the office that day. Good physicians want their patients to be relaxed and well informed. For a list of helpful questions to discuss with your doctor, please see www.SafeCosmeticTreatment.com. **cbm**

Got Cellulite? Introducing Mesotherapy Treatments



There are many different combinations of medications used by physicians performing me



Mesotherapy is a revolutionary new treatment that reduces cellulite and excess body fat with a series of medication injections below the skin's surface. Mesotherapy melts away unwanted cellulite and the hard-to-lose body fat in the tummy, under the chin, saddlebags, and love handles. Come in for a free consultation to learn more.

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