

Wrinkles & Lines, Valleys & Streams

Gold Coast cosmetic medicine practitioner **DR JOHN FLYNN** explains the concept of facial wrinkles.

It can be difficult to grasp the concept of the differences between skin wrinkles and deeper lines and furrows so I often liken it to the geographical analogy of valleys and streams.

Wrinkles, like the fine lines of the crow's feet, are superficial markings on the skin usually formed by muscle movements and/or gravity effects and can be thought of

Types of Wrinkles

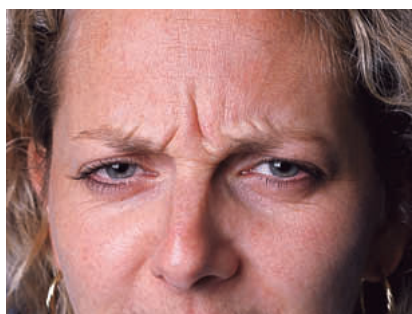
There are two types of wrinkles: dynamic and static. Dynamic wrinkles are formed by repeated muscle contraction involved in facial expressions such as frowning, smiling and laughing. Static wrinkles are formed by decreased skin elasticity and breakdown of collagen, loss of fat volume and the pull of gravity.



BEFORE



AFTER treatment with Collagen. Photo courtesy of Collagen Aesthetics



BEFORE



AFTER injections for wrinkles. Photo courtesy of Allergan

as a crease in the skin. This is similar to a river or stream, which is a superficial mark on the landscape. The nasolabial fold can be thought of more as a furrow or a valley and is due to a deeper structural issue in the facial tissues. Sometimes there is a crease in the base of the furrow such as you might find with a stream in the floor of a valley.

A different approach is needed for the correction of wrinkles than for furrows. For example, the injectable collagen replacement products can improve both but they have a particular advantage with finer wrinkles because they can be used close to the surface. Implants such as Softform or the newer injectable Aquamid are very good in correcting the furrow (valley) but not as effective for filling in the stream (wrinkle). This is because they need to be inserted at a deeper level. A combination of both approaches may be necessary.

At other times there may be many wrinkles and lines but the problem is more one of skin texture and quality so injectables or implants are just not the answer. In such circumstances skin rejuvenation is required to replace the 'glow' in the complexion. The **Soft Skin Programme**, a combination of effective at home skin care products and a specially designed microdermabrasion and skin peels programme will improve many skin quality issues. **Photorejuvenation** (non-burning light therapy) is also a good option, and of course for more severe cases, **laser resurfacing** could be the process of choice.

A word about lines. They are usually divided into static lines, which are always present and dynamic lines, which

are prominent with movement. However, the dynamic lines usually produce static lines with time. For example, even a 12 year old child will get the dynamic crow's feet lines when smiling but when they stop smiling, the lines disappear. And as we get older the crow's feet often remain as static lines between smiles. Dermal fillers are effective for static lines and muscle-relaxing injections (you know, the ones we are not supposed to name but everyone knows) are useful for both dynamic and hence static lines.

Nasolabial folds can usually be softened by dermal fillers or implants but the formation of this area is different from that of other lines. This furrow is a natural anatomical feature but one that deepens with age. This is because of changes in the facial skeleton around the jaw and also to the dropping of the cheek fat pad as we age. Even though various filling techniques will help to soften this furrow, the best treatment is often surgery to replace and elevate the cheek that has drooped. This is naturally a more involved process, one which not everyone will be prepared to undergo but nevertheless it is often the appropriate choice.

Like most things in cosmetic medicine, there is rarely a single process to fix a range of problems and the best answer usually lies in combinations of the most appropriate procedures and treatments. The best combination for everyone is there to be found but it requires a thorough assessment of each patient's individual issues. A consultation with your doctor is the best step to finding this combination. **ACSM**