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Reshape with diet and exercise? Feh!

Doctors offer alternatives to surgery

BY BARBARA SCHULER

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In the quest for the perfect body, diet and exercise don't always do it. And while liposuction definitely does, the pain, cost and downtime are formidable.

Recently, a number of noninvasive body-reduction procedures have begun appearing in doctors' offices and "medspas." Too good to be true? Not at all, says Dr. Andrew Jacono, section head of facial plastic and reconstructive surgery at North Shore University Hospital. But, he points out, "there are differences in what you can accomplish."

The new noninvasive treatments "aren't going to take care of yards of skin around your abdomen," says Jacono, who also has a medspa in Manhasset. But, he says, they can help people with minor issues, people who "are not the best candidates for true surgical treatments." Until now, he says, those people had no other options. "You either had surgery or you lived with it."

While certainly not cheap (costs range from \$500 to \$3,500), these new treatments promise to tone and trim with virtually no discomfort or downtime. Here's a sampling:

TITAN

Widely available at medspas, Titan is used more frequently on the face and neck,



Dr. Stephen Greenberg demonstrates the ZERONA laser with a patient in Woodbury.

but is sometimes billed as an alternative to a tummy tuck.

The treatment: An infrared light heats areas below the skin's surface, causing a tightening of the collagen. The treatment produces a brief heating sensation that most people find tolerable, though some take a mild pain reliever first.

Results: Titan will not reduce fat or cellulite, but will make skin tighter and firmer. It offers very natural results and is especially good for people who've lost weight or just had a baby, says Sabrina Kharouba, clinical director of Laser Cosmetics in Great Neck.

Cost: Laser Cosmetics charges \$2,000 to \$2,500 for the

recommended series of three treatments, four weeks apart.

VELASHAPE

Combining light, heat, suction and massage, VelaShape is "the gold standard for cellulite improvement," says Dr. Neil Sadick, a dermatologist with offices in Great Neck. While nothing "cures" cellulite, Sadick, who helped develop the technology, says VelaShape offers significant improvement.

The treatment: After application of a conducting gel, the device is rolled over the areas to be treated. Patients report feeling slight warmth, with a pressure similar to a massage.

Results: VelaShape users

often see improvements in the appearance of cellulite and a reduction in circumference in treated areas after one treatment, but results are more marked after the recommended four to eight treatments.

Cost: Sadick charges \$500 for one treatment, \$2,000 for five, \$3,500 for eight.

ZERONA

Relatively new, ZERONA is a low-level laser specifically designed for noninvasive body contouring.

The treatment: Dr. Stephen Greenberg, a Woodbury cosmetic surgeon who's been using ZERONA for a little more than a month, says the treatment works by deflating fat

cells. "The laser basically punches a hole in the fat cell and the fat drains out," he explains. It's then naturally excreted from the body over a period of a couple of months.

Results: Studies have reported an overall loss of 4 to 10 inches, though Greenberg cautions that it works better in some people than others. It's especially effective in waist, hips and thighs, he says.

Cost: Greenberg charges \$3,000 for the recommended package of six treatments over two weeks.

ZELTIQ

The new "toy" in town, this treatment is widely available in Europe. It has FDA approval to cool skin during dermatologic treatments and is being studied as a fat reducer.

The treatment: Instead of heat, Zeltiq uses cold. A process called cryolipolysis destroys fat cells, which are then gradually eliminated from the body. Dr. Arielle Kauvar, a Manhattan dermatologist, one of the first in this area to offer Zeltiq, says patients report "intense cold" for the first few minutes, then the skin becomes numb. She says there may be some bruising or soreness.

Results: Kauvar and Sadick (who will be offering the treatment in the next month or so) both say they've seen good results in people with localized fat deposits — love handles, hips, back and abdomen.

Cost: Kauvar charges \$500 to \$1,800 a session, depending on areas treated. Some people see improvement after one treatment, she says, while others benefit from two or three.