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# LOOKING GLASS

SENSITIVE SKIN WHISPERERS / FAT COMEBACK? / WHAT CAN'T SALMON SPERM DO?

## FAT Nostalgia

*We've spent the last decade breaking up with every extra ounce, and now our skinny frames are tinged with regret. Fortunately, there's a classic solution, and it's back in vogue.* BY JAMIE ROSEN

It's a familiar tale from the beauty canon: A doctor takes unwanted fat from a patient's tush and injects it into her face, so that when someone greets her with a peck on the cheek, they are, in fact, kissing her ass. It's a comedy, it's a tragedy, it's nothing new, as fat grafting has been around since the advent of plastic surgery in the late 1800s.

But in 2026 it's all looking very different. The impact of 12 percent of Americans being on GLP-1s is being felt in the heavens—airlines report lower fuel costs—and at doctors' offices, where patients who have lost inches in one area are coming in to have them put back in others. The rise of aesthetic procedures in general has doctors revisiting the thing so many of their patients are trying to get rid of: fat. Specifically, using it for aesthetic enhancement, relying on it anew for subtle and long-lasting volume replacement and glowing skin.

"I got to a moment when I thought, I love surgery, but we're not fundamentally doing anything for the tissues when we pull and plug and change the face," says New York plastic surgeon Haideh Hirmand. "I was looking for a way to make my surgeries more intelligent rather than just erasing the signs of aging. That's when I started embracing fat again."

Fat used in grafting can be processed into either nanofat or microfat, both of which are touted for regenerative qualities as well as the ability to subtly add volume. Nanofat is injected superficially all over the face for enhanced skin quality, or traced into superfine "smoker" lines above the lip or horizontal lines on the neck. It's also being used in conjunction with microneedling. Microfat, which is a bit denser, is used to fill out hollow areas in the tops of hands, temples, cheeks, undereyes, and even scalp and forehead. It is considered a semipermanent solution; it takes a few months to show the final results, but it lasts for years.

"We are uncovering benefits we didn't know about," says Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Carl Truesdale, who now does fat grafting alongside nearly every facelift surgery to create symmetry and add strategic volume. "Nuanced, beautiful fat grafting is one of the things that makes people go from saying 'She looks pretty good' to 'Oh my god, she came out of a time machine.'"

While often done in conjunction with other surgeries, fat grafting is also gaining popularity as a stand-alone procedure for patients in their thirties. "They are sensitive to global volume loss," Hirmand says. "The older generation of surgeons had nothing to offer them. Now we make a plan."

If those patients don't have enough body fat ("It's so common in my practice," says Hirmand) or don't want to go through a procedure to harvest their own, some doctors are leaning on [Renuva](#). It is a fat matrix that is injected and becomes populated with your own fat cells, much like an empty honeycomb filling up with honey, so that over a period of a few months a patient's fat will fill and eventually replace the matrix. Renuva is derived from human tissue that has been highly purified so that there are no remaining fat cells.

AlloClac is a similar option. It also has an extracellular matrix, but it does contain fat cells with, according to its website, "minimized DNA content." Some doctors have expressed a need for long-term data, but many agree that there is no option like it, particularly because its denser texture makes it more suitable for the body. "For volume, it goes a long way," says Beverly Hills and Nashville plastic surgeon Charles Galanis, who uses AlloClac in the breasts, buttocks, and outer hips to create smooth silhouettes. "Ideally, you replace like with like," he says. "This is the first time we can replace fat with...almost fat. We've been wanting something like this for years." **TAC**

