



A nip in time saves a tuck

In terms of avoiding, or at least delaying, major surgery such as a facelift, Dr Nettle says that it depends what is meant by major. He says smaller surgical procedures, such as eyelid lifts and mini facelifts, could be considered as preventative measures.

Sydney cosmetic surgeon Dr Warwick Nettle agrees, citing dermal filler Radiesse as one such product. "It's a great little filler, in particular for that whole mid-cheek area, which can atrophy a lot," he says. "Things like Radiesse are really worthwhile and really useful relatively early. What it will do is stop the skin from sagging so much, and therefore prevent the need for skin tightening-type procedures."

Another minimally invasive technique is intense pulsed light therapy (IPL), which uses light instead of lasers to help stave off more drastic measures. In addition to treating red and brown age spots, IPL uses heat to stimulate collagen production, resulting in a slight tightening of the skin. "Collagen reacts to heat by contracting, and that's how you get some improvement to the skin just by doing IPL alone," Dr Nettle explains. "So it's probably worthwhile doing early-ish."

"A lot of people can get some really great benefits from doing their eyelids really early," he notes. "Particularly if they have bags in the lower lids. The bag in itself stretches the skin. Now, if you get rid of the thing that's stretching the skin, you're not going to have to deal with the skin later, which is a much more fundamentally difficult and major procedure," he says.

Dr Nettle also suggests that mini-lifts, which involve fewer incisions and can be done under a local anaesthetic, are beneficial for some earlier than they might think. "There are people who definitely benefit from a mini-lift in their late 30s," Dr Nettle says. "Having said that, by far the most common people that we're doing the mini-lifts on are in their mid- to late-40s."