

LOOKING GOOD

- Esthetic Dentistry
- Hair Removal/Electrolysis
- Physicians:
Plastic Surgeons
- Skin Care:
Centers/Products
- Vein Therapy

Why fight the signs of aging? For some, it's a matter of looking as good on the outside as they feel on the inside. For others, it's a Don Quixote "tilting at windmills" effort to stop the flow of time. You'll find reams of psychologically uplifting literature proclaiming the virtues of "aging gracefully" versus opting for those so-called "face lifts."

The fabled "fountain of youth" could be interpreted as the common sense advice of drinking plenty of clean water to keep your skin hydrated. The skin is the body's largest organ and it takes a beating from environmental factors ranging from air pollution to an excess of the sun's rays. However, when putting your best face, hip or leg forward is a priority, it may be time to sort through the myriad of age reversal options. Those include plastic surgery, liposuction, BoTox™ or collagen injections, chemical peels, microdermabrasion, lasers to eliminate unsightly varicose veins and more.

Dr. Steven Nitsch of Parkway Plastic Surgery in Kalamazoo is a board-certified plastic surgeon, offering a broad spectrum of treatment options. "We provide both aesthetic and reconstructive facial procedures for trauma, skin cancer, normal aging, and congenital defects like cleft lip and palate," he explains. "We also do body contouring, breast reductions, liposuction and reconstruction following substantial

LESSONS FROM DON QUIXOTE & PONCE DE LEON

weight loss.

If the more invasive procedures are not what you wish to pursue, Dr. Nitsch says there are many other options available to help you look as good on the outside as you feel on the inside. "One psychological motivation for intervention is maintenance and the other is improvement," he says. "Those on the younger side of the age range for aesthetic cosmetic procedures usually set goals for maintenance. They usually prefer the injections of fillers, chemical peels or the use of BoTox™ to try to calm down Mother Nature. At the other end of the spectrum, many people hope to return to a look that they may have had years previously, and that may require actual surgery."

Dr. Nitsch cautions his patients to be realistic about their expectations. "My philosophy is to first ascertain what the patient feels is the problem - in essence, make a diagnosis - then I can offer several procedure and treatment options for differing levels of improvement," he explains. "If a patient can understand the types of results they might expect from these interventions, then they can make an informed decision on how to proceed." For more information on options available at Parkway Plastic Surgery, call (269) 343-5750.

Another avenue to consider when traveling the route of Ponce de Leon is the advantage of seeking out a companion to assist you on your journey. Gina Szpak is one of the personal guides - a certified medical aesthetician - available at Bella Kara Skin Care Treatment Center in Portage. "I enjoy helping women discover the basics to take proper care of their skin, from the daily use of sunscreen - in all seasons - to cleansing and the right moisturizer for their skin type," she says. "Holistically, it is vital to be aware of

the benefits of good nutrition for beauty from the inside out. The state of your skin is an indicator of your overall health and many people still do not drink enough water to clean out their system."

Gina and Bella Kara owner Linda Perez, also a Certified Medical Aesthetician, go beyond mere pampering into the realm of skin wellness. The salon offers its own line of products, deep chemical peels and LED light rejuvenation therapy. "The LED light stimulates the body's own regeneration process in the dermis and builds collagen," Szpak explains. "Micro current was first used in physical therapy to stimulate damaged cells in muscle tissue. Studies found it showed positive toning effects on the skin as well, particularly for injured areas or scar tissue. Basically, the slight current sends a painless wake up signal that jump starts the cells natural electrical system."

Regarding her role as a "skin care guru," Szpak says she has seen too many people waste their money on products found in their local supermarket or neighborhood drug store. "Most people don't look closely at the ingredients and additives in these products and some may actually be detrimental to their skin," she warns. "When you build a relationship with a skin specialist, you actually save money in the long run by removing the aspects of experimenting and guesswork. Our entire intention is to help your skin heal and to make it look better."

For more information on Bella Kara Skin Care Treatment Center, go to mibellakara.com or call (269) 323-8442.