

CONTOUR CULTURE

FROM 'TWEAKMENT' TRENDS TO AESTHETIC DENTISTRY, LAURA KENNEDY LOOKS AT THE CHANGING COSMETIC TREATMENTS WE ARE HAVING IN 2022



If you Google 'Botox in Dublin', you'll be met with more than 2.5 million search results, but then, Irish women have always had a complex relationship with cosmetic augmentation. It is a quietly booming industry as we make the most of 'tweakments' but generally refrain from talking about it. Research out of Cork University Hospital in 2017 found that Ireland was then the global leader in online searches for lip fillers, coming third for Botox searches. It also noted that there was a correlation between online searches for cosmetic procedures and the numbers of people following through to have cosmetic work done. We aren't alone in our obsession with our changing faces. Last year, searches in Britain for aesthetic treatments rocketed by 50 per cent. Britain's non-surgical augmentation market for tweakments is reportedly set to be worth £3 billion by 2024.

Alice Hart-Davis, British-based cosmetic treatments expert, award-winning beauty journalist and founder of The Tweakments Guide says, "I've been amazed by

someone who looks polished and fresh but who has lived through a global crisis and has more important things to do than get her roots done every three weeks or spend an extra hour blow drying elaborate hair extensions. Our aesthetic has changed along with our priorities.

It's a good thing because while Irish women may have changed as consumers, the Irish government remains as inefficient as ever. In 2017, the government approved what is called the General Scheme of the Patient Safety (Licensing) Bill. This establishes a licensing framework for hospitals and other services that are not currently included in other legislation. Its focus is specifically on "services that are potentially high risk if not provided to proper standards" and overtly references the need for such a framework in relation to "cosmetic surgery services". This could also be interpreted to refer to non-invasive cosmetic treatments requiring medical expertise and conditions, like injectable filler, which is currently unregulated and can be administered by

is hoping for movement toward better regulation. It's woefully inadequate at the moment, but the government has announced its intention to introduce a licensing regime for non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as Botox and fillers. That would mean all practitioners had to hold a licence, and meet certain standards, before they could inject filler or toxins. Who will decide on those standards? Who will assess practitioners? Will it mean only medics can inject? It's hard to say just now and it's going to take a few years, but this is something that the industry has been needing for the 20-plus years that I've been writing about it, so late is better than never."

If we are moving away from very obvious augmentation, we are also going back to fundamentals. While non-invasive treatments are still proving more popular than surgical procedures, our conception of facial beauty is widening. A 2022 British Orthodontic Society survey found that 84 per cent of orthodontists surveyed reported an increase in adult patients. Most

"COSMETIC DENTISTRY is the new FACE of FACIAL REJUVENATION"

the way attitudes to tweakments have changed since the start of the pandemic. You'd think that being faced with a potentially deadly disease would have made people concentrate on family, friends and health – and relegated facial treatments to the bottom of their list of concerns, but it's had the opposite effect. Every practitioner I know has been flat-out busy since re-opening, and it's not just a 'catch-up' effect of people who have missed regular treatments. Clinics are seeing heaps of new patients, all of whom are keen to have significant amounts of tweakments. Somehow, the pandemic has accelerated people's thinking and decision-making around tweakments, so rather than humming and haw-ing about whether to have treatment for years, they're jumping right in."

Trends are changing, though, and obvious filler has become undesirable. Kylie Jenner declared that she had dissolved (some) of hers in 2018. She appears to have reversed that decision shortly thereafter, but the declaration opened a door to new aesthetic possibilities. We all knew the writing was on the wall once the Love Islanders began to part ways with exaggeratedly inflated lips. First, Molly-Mae Hague, then last season's Faye Winter. They haven't completely abandoned filler, but the aesthetic is dramatically different. Generally, post-pandemic we have been seeking the best (and this is key) recognisable version of ourselves again –

anyone from a cosmetic doctor to some guy in the back room of a hair salon. The bill underwent pre-legislative scrutiny by the Oireachtas Committee on Health in 2018 and was sent to the Office of the Attorney General for drafting. It's still there.

Filler is not something to be afraid of – administered by a qualified medical professional who is equipped to avoid and treat any potential complications, it is an incredibly useful aesthetic tool. Used properly, it isn't even obvious that you've had anything done. Botox is more regulated – legally in Ireland, it must be administered by a doctor. This is in part why there are generally fewer reported complications with Botox than with filler, and fewer horror stories. While anyone can administer filler, the dissolving agent used to remove it – Hyalase – is regulated and can only be administered by a doctor or specially trained aesthetic nurse. Most people with poorly administered filler do not go to a trained medical professional to have it done but have no choice but to see one to have the damage repaired. If complications like infection or filler entering a blood vessel or artery arise, the results can be dire and include tissue loss or even blindness.

Hart-Davis says that the regulatory situation for our neighbours in Britain is similar, but a new model is being floated which the Irish industry may benefit from emulating. "Everyone in the aesthetics industry

patients are between 26 and 55, and 80 per cent of them are female.

Cosmetic dentistry is the new face of facial rejuvenation. Invisalign – 'invisible' plastic braces which you change weekly or biweekly over the course of treatment – have taken a good deal of the embarrassment out of having orthodontic treatments in adulthood. Train tracks are all well and good in your teens when, if you are lucky enough to have parents who can afford them, they are a rite of passage. They feel slightly more conspicuous when you're in your mid-thirties or forties and trying to give a presentation at work. According to dentist Dr. Rhona Eskander, owner of the London-based Chelsea Dental Clinic and the woman who has launched countless celebrity smiles, cosmetic dental work helps to take years off the face and restore structure. "There has been a huge boom for Invisalign braces. Cosmetic bonding is also often sought after – this is adding a resin to the edges of the teeth or the whole surface. Bonding can be used to enhance shapes, change the colour of teeth (if composite veneers) or help mask minor rotations."

As we age, our teeth move, becoming more crowded and naturally losing whiteness and opacity. Restoring these takes years from the face. Eskander says that the shape of the smile is also important. "People are also now more interested in 'widening' smiles. I talked