



Plastic Surgeon Dr. Randy Miller explains the new stem-cell assisted procedure to a prospective patient

PHOTO BY ANDREW URBAN

TURNING BACK THE HANDS

A New Surgical Technique Turns Back the Clock

BY RICHARD SHELLENE

“As plastic surgeons we have something for every part of the body, but until recently we had nothing for the hands,” says Dr. Randy Miller M.D. “Now we do.”

That something is a new procedure where fat is transferred to the hands from another part of the body, after enhancing its concentration of stem cells and growth factors. The results are hands that regain volume, look years younger and continue to improve over time due to the stem cells.

For Dr. Miller and his fellow plastic surgeons, hands are telltale signs of aging, often overlooked by women who undergo other procedures to turn back the clock. “They look great from top to bottom until they reach across the table,” he says.

The key to the procedure is the discovery in 2001 that our body’s fat tissue contains adult stem cells, the mature form of embryonic stem cells we all have in the womb. The embryonic ones can become any cell in the body; the ones in fat can only turn into connective tissue such as collagen and new skin, which is ideal for cosmetic purposes.

Dr. Miller, who recently served as president of the prestigious Florida Society of Plastic Surgeons, is a pioneer in the use of fat as a natural filler, as opposed to synthetic fillers such as Juvederm or Radiesse.

“Fat acts as the filler from your own body,” says Dr. Miller, who practices in Coconut Grove. If injected correctly, the fat will ‘re-vascularize’—i.e. grow a network of blood vessels—and survive permanently. And with fat, says Dr. Miller, “the stem cells act to regenerate and repair the skin,

which continues to improve in color and texture over many years.”

For the procedure itself, the first step is to use liposuction to ‘harvest’ fat, which is washed to rid it of oils and impurities, then centrifuged to produce a concentrated layer of stem cell rich fat.

“These days we add PRP,” says Dr. Miller, which stands for ‘platelet rich plasma,’ the part of your blood that contains special proteins called growth factors. “Combined with the adipose, it’s a miraculous procedure,” he says. Next the mixture of fat and PRP is injected into the back of the hands between the bones, tendons and veins where volume has been lost.

“The nice thing about this procedure is that it’s entirely performed under local anesthesia. It’s an easy procedure for patients, with minimal pain and no heavy bandages,” says Dr. Miller.

The result is hands that lose their boniness and pronounced tendons and blood vessels. The skin looks renewed, and continues to improve over time. “It’s beyond plastic surgery. It’s regenerative medicine,” says Dr. Miller. “It doesn’t stop the aging process but it makes the hands look rejuvenated for many years.” ■

