

the Eight Biggest Beauty Breakthroughs

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS

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WHEN YOU NEED a lasting cure for a genuine illness, you turn to the medical profession. When you need fast fixes for problems that run only skin-deep, you turn to the beauty industry. Got flat hair, flaky skin, a pallid complexion? You can usually find a solution that will repair or at least camouflage the symptoms. They're not exactly cures for cancer, but these remedies can be pretty important if they put an end to a lifelong preoccupation, shave 20 minutes off your morning routine, or make one of your physical features look dramatically better than it did yesterday. That's why, every year, *Health* seeks out the most-significant innovations in the world of beauty. Digging through heaps of merchandise and piles of press releases,

we home in on the products and procedures that deliver benefits that weren't available this time last year—the beauty boons we deem breakthroughs. Because they're brand-new, some of them may not be widely available (at least for now), and they obviously don't come with the same long-term track record

as treatments that have been popular for decades. But based on our review of scientific studies, along with interviews of industry and medical experts, these are the eight breakthroughs with the most potential to solve the beauty problems women deal with every day. Ready to be in the know? Keep reading.

1 fat injections that smooth cellulite

Surprise: Fat may be the best cure for cellulite. But don't grab that Krispy Kreme just yet—this fat is injected, not ingested. Over the past year, some cosmetic dermatologists have begun injecting patients' own fat or Fascian (a naturally occurring, U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved filler derived from the tissue of human cadavers) to provide instant improvements for women who haven't been able to get rid of their dimples with diet and exercise. "We've found that these natural substances are very effective at filling in cellulite," says Neal Sadick, M.D., one of the pioneers of the procedures and clinical professor of dermatology at Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York. "Because both fat and Fascian have bigger molecules than injectables like collagen, Dermalogen, and Restalyne, they can be used to fill in larger areas and depressions on the body."

Don't get rid of fat: Repurpose it. Some dermatologists have begun taking fat from women's abdomens, hips, and thighs and reinjecting it as cellulite filler.

The process is quick and relatively—but not completely—painless. "If the patient is using her own fat [usually from the hips, buttocks, or abdomen], we numb that area first with a local anesthetic and extract the fat with a syringe," explains Barney Kenet, M.D., a dermatologist at New York Presbyterian Hospital. "Then we anesthetize the dimpled area and use a series of injections to fill the depressions." With either injectable, the procedure takes just one visit, and the results last up to a year, but Sadick is conducting a clinical study to see whether natural fat has even better staying power than Fascian. "In my experience,

some patients are seeing long-term results," Kenet says. The price? Upwards of \$5500 per treatment, depending on the doctor.

For a list of dermatologists who offer fat or Fascian injections, visit www.topdocs.com or www.aad.org.

2 lasting color for hard-to-dye hair

Most women assume they can easily change their hair color if the need or desire strikes—for instance, when they go gray a little earlier than expected or when a rough week calls for a mood-mending makeover. But that's not necessarily true. "Some women can never get complete coverage, even with heavy-duty permanent dyes," says Amy McMichaels, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at Wake Forest University. "Wire, coarse, or thick and curly hair is more porous and therefore doesn't hold pigment molecules as well," she explains. "The color just seeps out of the strand." The problem often affects African-American hair, which tends to coarsen as it grays. Instead of achieving a uniform brunette shade when they color, for example, women with this hair type typically get a dull brownish tone with gray streaks, says Stuart Gavert, coowner of and stylist at Gavert Atelier salon in Beverly Hills, California. Plus, the color fades rapidly, requiring touch-ups every two weeks instead of the usual six.

Recently, however, some of the best salons have found a solution with Chromatherm, a heat-activated coloring technique from Japan. "It's very similar to the Japanese thermal-straightening process," Gavert says. "You use a hot iron to melt the pigment into the

strands, sealing the cuticle as you go. Because the heat literally melts the dye molecules into the hair, you don't need ammonia or peroxide, which is usually required to open the cuticle." The color also contains penetrating deep-conditioners. "Not only do hard-to-color types get vibrant, gloss-color that lasts the full six to eight weeks, they get the added benefit of a smoother, silkier texture," Gavert says. "Most clients find that it makes their hair much more manageable and frizz-resistant." In fact, anyone looking for less damage and more shine can try this new option. It costs about \$200, admittedly pricey but no more

than many top salons charge for their lower-tech permanent-color processes.

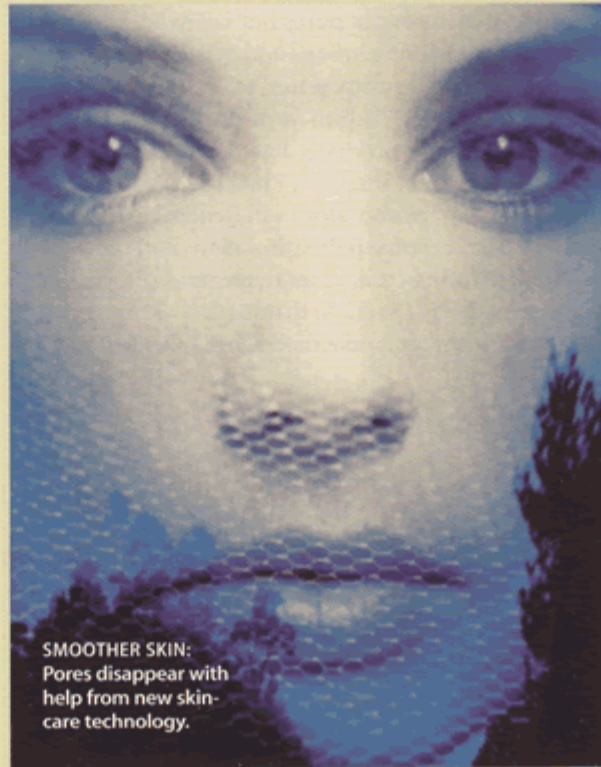
To find a colorist who uses Chromatherm, log on to www.stylist911.com or www.salonlistings.com.

3 lasers that eliminate stretch marks and scars

Even in this age of quick fixes, two types of flaws are notoriously difficult to remove or lighten: depressed scars (like those caused by acne or chicken pox)

and stretch marks. "In both cases, you're attempting to correct damage in the deeper layers of the skin, not just the dermis," says David Goldberg, M.D., director of skin-laser research at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. "That's why topical treatments, including lasers and creams, are generally ineffective."

But this year, two lasers received clearance from the FDA for correcting these seemingly permanent problems. The first, CoolTouch, was approved to treat depressed scars after a Mount Sinai study



New pore-minimizing lotions are high-tech cosmetic tricks.

But anyone who's endured expensive (and sometimes painful) facials will appreciate their magic.

found that three successive treatments stimulated the production of collagen around the site of the scar, "thereby filling the indentation," says study author Goldberg. More good news: The treatments were quick (less than 15 minutes), caused none of the bleeding associated with traditional resurfacing lasers, and produced no side effects. CoolTouch is effective on any skin tone. And unlike the effects of collagen injections, the most common treatment for depressed scars, the results of this laser are permanent.

Not long after CoolTouch gained FDA clearance, the ReLume laser became the first to be approved for re-pigmenting lightened skin, including stretch marks that have whitened with age. "This laser stimulates the production of melanin in the skin," Sadick says. "In 6 to 12 treatments, it can return the lightened skin close to its original color-permanently." So far, it's the only laser that has consistently been able to treat pigment loss of any kind, whether it's caused by stretch marks, vitiligo, scarring, or psoriasis. And like CoolTouch, ReLume is quick, painless, and free of side effects. Sadick has only one word of caution: "I wouldn't

recommend it for anyone who is in the habit of tanning, as they might have a severe sunburn reaction."

To find doctors who use these lasers, log on to www.premierplasticsurgery.com or visit www.skinandhealth.com.

4 an instant pore-shrinker

As anyone who has sat through a facial can tell you, having the gunk squeezed from your pores is not a pampering experience, no matter how gentle your aesthetician may be. And it may not produce the flawless appearance you're hoping for. "Some pores, over time, become permanently enlarged," says David Bank, M.D., director of the Center for Cosmetic and Laser Surgery in Mount Kisco, New York. "The opening can become loosened by repeated clogging and stretching over the years, or simply by the loss of collagen as you age-something that's predetermined by genetics."

The cosmetics industry now offers an alternative to