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EXCLUSIVE REPORTS

From the May 23, 2003 print edition

Cosmetic surgeons see increasing treatment of hands

Rick Desloge

Dr. Dee Anna Glaser has put her finger on a new cosmetic surgery trend: hand rejuvenation.

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"I am asked almost daily about old looking hands and the treatment options," said Glaser, a dermatologist with SLUCare physicians group and an associate professor at Saint Louis

University School of Medicine.

"Just this morning (May 21), out of 20 patients, two asked about their old hands."

"We have much more interest in the hands," said Ella Kuznetsova, a nurse with St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery in Creve Coeur. "That work has maybe doubled in the last year."

The hands are the latest body part where people -- primarily women ages 40 to 65 -- are turning to their dermatologists or plastic surgeons to help them turn back their body's clock.

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Cosmetic surgery offices here are seeing an increase in hand peels, which can run \$75 to \$100 a treatment, and more expensive laser removal of age spots, a procedure that can run \$600 for three treatments at St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery. Some people might need more than three treatments to be effective, plastic surgeons said.

In rare cases, patients may spend \$1,500 to \$5,000 to add fat to otherwise bony hands. That procedure also takes several visits, according to Glaser, who is among the few doctors locally who have handled the operation. But the operation has a plus -- the fat is removed from other parts of the body, mostly the stomach and the hips.

Kuznetsova said her work concentrates on removing age spots with an intense pulse light similar to a laser, a \$600 treatment. Patients are more likely to start with an oil massage and a "Parisian peel," which costs between \$75 to \$100.

Michelle Clark, the business manager for St. Louis Cosmetic Surgery, said the office has not handled fat injections to the hands recently, but quoted a patient a \$1,000 price for the procedure. The patient backed out after seeing pictures of the procedure, which is done in the office.

"It just kind of freaks them out because it looks like you've slit your wrists," Clark said. "The person wanted us to place a bracelet tattoo around the wrist where the injections go."

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