

Interview with Dr Barry Lycka & Dr Eugene Nowak

Dr Barry Lycka cosmetic dermatologist from Edmonton, Alberta is talking today with

Dr Eugene Nowak board certified dermatologist from Chula Vista, California

Today Dr Lycka is talking once again with Dr Eugene Nowak, about facial rejuvenation, particularly using Ulthera. Dr Nowak is always enlightening about the latest thinking and procedures in cosmetic surgery today.

Welcome, Dr Nowak!

Ulthera is a treatment that both Dr Lycka & Dr Nowak have been using for a long time. It is a focused ultrasound which helps to tighten the skin, in a non-invasive way.

Yes, Ulthera is a great treatment – Dr Nowak was the first practice to launch it in San Diego. It is unique because it lets you actually visualize and see the layers of the skin. You can see the layer that you target when doing a facelift but instead of having to go in with invasive surgery, and the downtime and recovery, and risks, we are using the ultrasonic heat that causes a lifting and tightening. You really do see some lifting. We can do one side of a patient's face, sit them up and show them that there is already a visible difference happening, and then the collagen remodeling continues to happen over the next 6 months.

Dr Lycka adds that it is a procedure that a patient may or may not be happy with straight away. But if you are patient, at 6 months there is probably a very good chance that you are going to be happy, because the results are additive over time, and the collagen remodeling does take time to accomplish.

Yes it definitely takes time and we see the results improve and that is one of the challenges – we all forget where we start, whether it's filler patients, or Ultherapy patients, we need to take the good pictures so that we can sit down and show them. Some of the nicer results are patients that came in and said 'I don't think it did much' and then they look at their picture and they say, 'wow, I don't remember looking like that!' All doctors need to take good, consistent photographs of their patients because the results at the beginning are very subtle, and if a person isn't watching, they really don't see the results sometimes as they do develop.

Absolutely – and Dr Nowak gets that. It actually happened to him. He had some filler treatment done in his cheeks, and it only took him 5 days to actually forget where he started from. The first four days he was very happy, then on the morning of the fifth day he thought that he should have had more done, but he looked at his pictures and realized that no he didn't need more, he was at a nice natural level. And that is what we all are looking for – keeping a nice natural result. That is the beauty of Ulthera. The patient looks better, younger, fresher, lifted but they don't look unnatural.

What are the areas that you use Ulthera on, Eugene? Which are your favorite?

It was pioneered as a facial treatment. It was the first treatment to get an FDA approval for skin lifting which is a very tough criteria to meet and it's the only technology that has been able to meet that. A standard full facial treatment will be the jawline, the cheeks, and around the eye area. We will combine that many times with some Thermage especially when we want to get real close to the eye area, the eyelid skin itself on both upper and lower eyelid we can use Thermage to get closer. The neck is a really nice area and we are really excited that this past year they added the chest and décolletage area because that has always been a stubborn area. Here in Southern California people with a lifetime of sun exposure get loss of collagen, laxity in those areas, lines, wrinkles and pigmentation changes so the Ultherapy is an excellent tool for getting that tightness. We have also combined it with PRP Platelet Rich Plasma and MicroPen treatments where we are trying to get more texture changes. After one treatment there is a visible difference but since we have been doing this for a number of years, patients who have had, 2, 3, 4 treatments are really looking better and

better. It is really exciting to show someone their picture from 3, 4, and 5 even 10 years ago and they look younger today than when they started.

Dr Lycka finds it very exciting. Two comments that Dr Nowak made. Firstly that Dr Nowak is combining therapies, not just using Ulthera alone but combining it with PRP. PRP is when we take a person's own blood and spin it down and activate it, then put it back into them. The activation seems to turn on certain growth factors and help healing and it actually does amazing things for rejuvenating the skin. And secondly, Dr Nowak is using the MicroPen which is using micro-needles to go into the skin which rejuvenates the cutaneous part of the skin. So all three therapies together are working very well together.

The Ultherapy is dealing with those deeper layers, and it is improving the collagen, and we do get some texture improvements just with that alone, but the PRP really 'supercharges' that response and the MicroPen (it is not a laser, it is mechanical) is collagen induction therapy which gives that nice boost, cleaning the surface of the skin improving some of the pigmentation as well as the texture.

Way back in 1990s, Dr Lycka wrote about combination therapies when very few people were mentioning it at that time. These are now something that more and more doctors are doing to get enhanced results. Dr Nowak is amongst those doctors that have been pioneering that approach for a long time.

Yes, the combination definitely yields a much better result for the patient because we tighten the skin but that doesn't really replace volume and Dr Nowak sees patients at his practice who have had full on face lifts and come in for their fillers because it didn't replace the volume, the muscle loss, the bone loss, the fat redistribution and fat loss – they still needed fillers and often will also need a fractional laser or CO2 laser or MicroPen to clean the surface of the skin because the skin is tighter but the skin doesn't necessarily look prettier or better.

Now we are going to talk about another technique that Dr Nowak has been using which is helping a lot of patients. It is called Thermo-Lipo.

Everyone has heard of Liposuction - it's a procedure that we have been doing for a long time, but it doesn't always contract the skin, so some patients have loose skin afterwards. Well there is a technique called Thermage where we use focused RF (Radio Frequency) to get higher energy into that area. So the two of these combined is something that Dr Nowak told Dr Lycka about some years ago, and he is actually using it more and more.

Please tell us a bit more about Thermo-Lipo, Eugene?

Thermo-Lipo is a name that we have put together to let patients know that there is something different, there is another option. In fact some patients view it as an alternative to a tummy tuck. So we are taking the tumescent Lipo which is done under local anesthesia, so no IV's or added sedation or anything like that, and immediately we have finished the body shaping, body contouring, we do a Thermage treatment to the skin, the abdominal midsection is the most common area that we do but we will also do arm and leg treatments too. It has been an amazing addition – in fact it is a best kept secret because when you look up thermo-Lipo there isn't much written about it. Dr Nowak has done some studies with the Thermage company that shows that it works, and those who have it their skin is better and tighter. Stretch marks are smaller, surgical scars shrink down, and just this week, someone who had had this procedure 6 weeks ago was 9 and a half inches smaller across that midsection when we measured her - in fact that is a record for Dr Nowak, it is amazing.

Are there some patients who would have formerly gone for a tummy tuck that are now getting thermo-Lipo done?

Absolutely! In fact we still get patients who have had tummy tucks come in because they don't have the shape and contour around their waist and back and they still want to tighten up / freshen up the skin, from the tummy tuck. We do see patients who have been told that their only option is a tummy tuck and they are an excellent thermo-Lipo candidate.

So who is a great candidate for thermo-Lipo?

Well the first thing is that a person is looking for shape and contour, they may have laxity in the skin, they have excess, unwanted fat deposits in those areas and it is anywhere from people who are in good shape but with hereditary stubborn areas, or people just looking to make a change. With hormonal changes and changes of life it does become tougher and tougher to lose things as we did before. Those are the patients that are really ideal candidates for thermo-

Lipo. Someone who is NOT a candidate for one is someone who has had massive amounts of weight loss (100 - 150 pounds) and there is really no fat to pinch, it is really just loose skin. That is more of a surgical correction that is needed.

Dr Lycka finds the beautiful thing about these procedures is that there is less recovery time than with the traditional tummy tuck which is still a major surgical procedure with a lot of risk associated with it. So when we combine these smaller procedures then he finds that there is a much better result, and that some of the patients are happier as a result too.

Yes that is the number one concern for patients with the tummy tuck is the downtime and recovery time, as well as the scarring. There will be a massive hip to hip scar, and a scar around the belly button and for thermo-lipo really our incisions are about the size of the end of a pen so they are really small and they hide very nicely and patients are up walking 20 – 25 minutes the next day. Dr Nowak doesn't recommend it but he has had patients go to work the next day. Downtime with many procedures is low these days, in fact the majority of Dr Lycka's patients get their procedures done on Thursday / Friday and are back at work by Monday / Tuesday.

So thermo-Lipo is a low impact, low-risk procedure, where people get some phenomenal results and they are very happy with their results.

Yes, well the results are seen very quickly also. When people take their shower the next day they are already seeing a difference in those areas and definitely within a week it is visible, and at 6 weeks we take the 'after' pictures. There is still some healing going on at that time but most of it is done and we will see a good difference at that time.

So patient selection is important, but it's also important that patients select a good doctor and for them to know that there will be good help for them. That is where it is important to do research on the physician, meet with them, seeing their pictures and results, and to get someone who has experience – these are not procedures that you can learn in a weekend or a week, or a month or a year. They take several years of honing their skills to get to a high advanced level with these procedures. Both doctors have been doing liposuction for many years, decades in fact, and Dr Lycka has done thousands, and has amazing patient satisfaction. There have been many changes to the procedure over that time with tools, equipment and techniques, and adding Thermage to it really does just blend everything together!

A trend in cosmetic surgery overall is that results are getting better, there is less trauma, less downtime, higher degrees of patient satisfaction, and the results keep on getting better over time.

Yes, by adding the Thermage means that the skin gets better for up to 6 months afterwards, and Dr Nowak has pretty much a 90% success rate that one Thermage will be needed, maybe 10% of patients will come in and ask to be tighter, they have a nice results and want the skin tighter still, so we can do more Thermage on those areas.

And as a final note, Dr Nowak's practice was voted the Number One Cosmetic Dermatology Practice in San Diego last year (2014). They had been in the Top Ten for years and got selected to the number One spot last year. So they are all very excited about that and it really speaks well about what patients think of the practice. Dr Lycka adds that that speaks volumes about the practice that Dr Nowak has built over the years. It is important to build a great practice and keep it going over the years. In Edmonton, Dr Lycka has been voted Consumers Choice Award for Cosmetic Surgery for Thirteen consecutive years – which if not the record will be close to a record!

Good doctors keep on doing good cosmetic surgery. They are never happy with the status quo, they are always building a better practice as time goes on. We continue to work and educate ourselves, year after year, go to the meetings and learn and investigate the new techniques, and technologies and bring in the best treatments, techniques and technologies out there.

Thank you for that great information Dr Nowak, it's always a pleasure to talk to you!

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