



essential beauty

# Drop off kids, turn up for facelift

Some mothers spend thousands of dollars on plastic surgery to stop looking 'tired'.

**Words** Natasha Hughes

THINK Botox and you probably think corporate high-flyers or celebrities whose fortune relies on their faces, but it's another type of woman who is responsible for the huge rise in demand for "non-surgical cosmetic procedures". Ordinary, everyday mothers – the ones who do the school runs and maybe juggle a part-time job with home and family responsibilities – are wanting to reclaim what age and children have ravaged. And they are somehow finding the time and the money to do so, even if they're not always telling their partners about it.

"There's the phenomenon of the mother who comes in and says, 'Just do what it takes,'" says Marilyn Cassetta, cosmetic nurse at Silkwood Medical, Bondi Junction. "It's about themselves, not about anyone else. They've gone through all the pregnancies, the breastfeeding and sleepless nights; the attention's all been on the baby; they're not feeling good and they think, 'What about me?' And they're doing something about it."

This includes immobilising frown lines and crows' feet, defining lips, plumping facial folds and treating skin with chemical peels and laser treatments. Many mothers spend \$1500 every four to six months to look their best.

"There's also a

pressure on older mothers not to look like grandmas at the school gate," Cassetta says. "If you delay everything you pay the price – women who have their babies at 41 or 43 are picking up their kids as

50-year-olds and there are other mothers who are significantly younger."

Cosmetic nurse Kathleen Hoskins says 80 per cent of her clients at the Eden Institute in Baulkham Hills would be mothers and 50 per cent of those young mothers.

"They know they need to do something for themselves and they know there are options available," she says. "They're savvy consumers – they spend their money where it is well warranted. My first patient today, who only finished breastfeeding last week, said she realised there was a better way than buying a whole heap of [expensive] products."

The morning's other patients include a 38-year-old stepmother of three

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Marilyn Cassetta, cosmetic nurse



children who had her nasolabial (nose to mouth) folds filled “because that’s where she feels she looks tired” and a woman in her mid-40s who has two children under three (“fillers again”). Plastic surgeon Mark Edinburg says mothers often seek dramatic improvements but corporate women are after something more subtle.

A mother of three, who wants to be known only as “Jan”, says she began regular Botox and filler treatments four years ago, when she turned 42. They cost \$3500 a year. Her husband doesn’t know but she’s upfront with other women who, she says, often say she looks younger. “I consider it to be ‘secret women’s business’ and tell them what I have done when they comment,” Jan says. “Recently at a party I was approached by friends who said I looked

fantastic – so young – and I told them why.

“I’m self-conscious about the money side and don’t like to rub it in. It is all relative to income and it’s something I can afford.”

She plans a facelift “in due course” but says: “I’ll have to wait for my husband to go away on business.”

Of course, not all mothers are comfortable with intervention – or needles. Although they are classed as “non-surgical”, the popular cosmetic procedures are still invasive, particularly lip fillers, which require a dental block. Plastic surgeons talk about “experiencing some discomfort” but most women – even those who have gone through childbirth – would describe many of the procedures as “pretty painful”.

“When it’s your face being done, it can be pretty confronting,” says one long-term

Botox user.

Sydney socialite and hotels entrepreneur Terry Schwamberg, who is also a fortysomething mother of three, has chosen instead to invest in prestige skin care. “I’m not one for plastic surgery but I should never say never. At this point it seems to be OK,” says Schwamberg, who uses Estee Lauder’s Re-Creation range – \$690 for a 50-millilitre pot of face cream. “It pays off in the long run. If you have lovely skin, make-up goes on better and you feel better. If you put clogging creams on your face, it’s not going to help your skin.”

See Natasha Hughes’s blog at [blogs.smh.com.au/lifestyle/beautybeat/](http://blogs.smh.com.au/lifestyle/beautybeat/)

