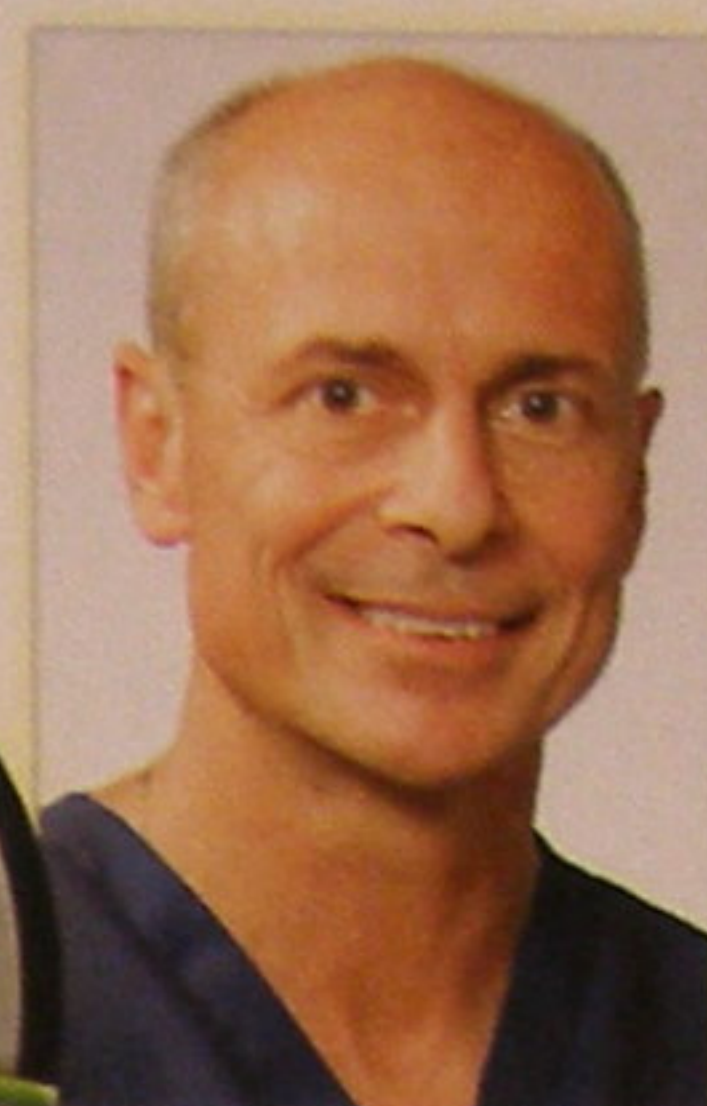


ask

the doctors



What are my options for dealing with bags and dark circles?

Dr. Niamtu:

As we age, the tissues inside the eyelid become weak

and allow the fat that normally protects and cushions the eyeball to protrude under the skin. This causes the fat bulges that you see, which cast a shadow (especially in overhead light) under the eyes that look like dark circles. In addition, most patients in your age group (50s) also have aging lower eyelid skin that is crinkly and adds to the condition.

Depending upon your specific condition, a lower eyelid blepharoplasty may be the answer. In this procedure, the surgeon reduces or repositions the fat to lessen the bulges. This can be done with an incision under the eyelash or from the inside of the lower lid with a hidden scar. The

excess and wrinkled skin can be addressed by either removing some skin or using lasers or chemical peels to shrink the skin, so no incision is necessary. Laser or chemical peel will also assist in removing pigmented skin in this region that may be contributing to the dark circles. The lower blepharoplasty procedure takes about 40 minutes and requires about a week for recovery.

What does it mean to use Botox or fillers off-label?

Dr. Schlessinger:

Just as with any drug, there are drug-specific treatment indications that are submitted to the

FDA for approval, and other treatment indications that may be pursued after the drug's approval. Using a drug or device off-label for non-FDA approved indications isn't unusual. For example, any person who has ever been on

minocycline for acne might be surprised to learn that when they used this drug, it was used off-label for a non-FDA approved indication. While millions of prescriptions for minocycline have been written, no actual FDA tests have ever been done on that drug for acne. Nonetheless, thousands of papers and informal studies have been performed that show it to be helpful for acne.

Drugs such as Botox or fillers (Restylane, Perlane, Juvéderm and others) have been FDA approved for very limited uses, and cosmetic surgeons (dermatologists and plastic/ENT/oral maxillofacial surgeons) have since developed other uses for these products. Although Botox is FDA approved to treat the frown lines between the eyes on the brow only, other areas, such as forehead wrinkles, crow's

feet and lip lines, are also commonly treated with Botox. And while just about every area on the face has, at one time or another, been injected with fillers, most fillers are FDA approved for treating the lines around the mouth (nasolabial folds). Off-label injections of Botox and fillers on the other areas of the face are common and, in the right hands (and that is always a huge part of the equation), these injections are safe.

If you have any concerns about the use of Botox or fillers for off-label use, be sure to talk to your cosmetic surgeon and make doubly sure you are in the office of someone who has been trained thoroughly, who does his or her own injections and doesn't pass off the injection process to someone else. ❗