

FDA Approves Wrinkle Drug

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Medicis Pharmaceutical Corp. said it received Food and Drug Administration clearance to sell Perlane, an injectable anti-wrinkle gel that is a thicker formulation of its Restylane dermal filler.

The approval gives the Scottsdale, Ariz., dermatology company a second product in the fast-growing market for non-surgical facial rejuvenation. The move will help Medicis meet mounting competition from Irvine, Calif.-based Allergan Inc., a larger company that sells two versions of a filler called Juvederm. Medicis said it would start shipping Perlane to dermatologists, plastic surgeons and other specialists within days.

Perlane, like Restylane and Juvederm, is a hyaluronic acid that is a natural, biocompatible substance. The products are approved as medical devices for use to plump up the deep folds that run from the bottom of the nose to the corners of the mouth. Physicians are using fillers in parts of the aging face that loses natural volume.

Perlane is identical to Restylane, except the gel particles are bigger, said Jeffrey S. Dover, a Boston dermatologist and investigator on the Medicis FDA human test. "The amount of material needed was slightly less than with Restylane, but the difference wasn't statistically significant," he added. Perlane persisted at least six months in two-thirds of patients, about the same as Restylane, he said.

Some physicians in Canada have been using Perlane and Restylane in combination to get optimal results in older patients who need significant volume restoration in the lower face. "It's great to attack the problem in layers," says Arthur Swift, a plastic surgeon in Montreal. Perlane is the "mattress stuffing" and Restylane is the "sheet tightening" on top, he said.

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