

TALK THERAPY

First the good news: It's okay to continue sipping that morning sugar-free vanilla latte or afternoon Diet Coke—pursing your lips won't increase the likelihood of developing vertical lines. However, smoking and sun exposure will almost certainly guarantee the formation of above-the-mouth grooves, according to Roy Geronemus, MD, a clinical professor of dermatology at New York University Medical Center in New York City. "Some lines are muscular and some are present whether or not the mouth is moving," he says. To tackle both, Geronemus often puts patients on a combination of laser and injectable therapies. "The nonablative Fraxel laser is a breakthrough for treating superficial to mildly deep wrinkles," he says. "You won't get the same results on extremely deep lines that you get with a resurfacing laser such as the CO₂, but you also don't have the hypopigmentation risk." He recommends four to five treatments at two- to three-week intervals. For immediate benefits, Geronemus will treat very superficial lines with collagen and may also use Botox. "You want to make sure the muscles still move so that the patient can use the upper lip," he says. "You need a doctor with some skill." Those looking for a DIY solution to reduce the appearance of furrows may want to switch lipsticks. "Stains and glosses can gather in lip creases," says makeup artist Schlip. "Try a gloss with a heavy pigment content so that it won't move, or select something with a light-reflective quality, which is less likely to settle into lines."—MEGAN DEEM