

Eye Rejuvenation ^[1]



Dr. Roy Geronemus.

by *Delia von Neuschatz*

The area underneath my eyes had been bothering me for a while as with the march of time, it was starting to look a bit hollow. I had done some research and knew that injecting fillers in the tear troughs could improve the look of the area, but for me, putting a syringe close to my eyes was a scary proposition! Still, I had seen good results with fillers on a friend or two and was considering the option. Then, I looked into laser treatments and in the process learned that they could also brighten the under-eye area in more ways than one.

While I was contemplating the idea of fillers, I went to see **Dr. Roy**

Geronemus [2] to eliminate some broken capillaries on my cheeks. He pointed out the visible blue veins underneath my eyes and said that he could remove those with a laser too. Ditto for the larger veins around my temples. I had noticed those blood vessels but they never bothered me much as I thought they were pretty common. Well, of course, after they were brought to my attention, that's all I could see when I looked into the mirror. But still, I held off. Would removing these veins affect the blood flow to the eyes? Even though Dr. Geronemus and two other dermatologists assured me it would have no detrimental effect on circulation, it took me a few months to screw up the courage to submit to a laser.



Before and After photos of laser treatments for the removal of blood vessels in the eye area. The pulses of light delivered by the laser cause the blood within the vein to coagulate, eventually destroying the vessel which is later

reabsorbed by the body. Blood then flows through the deeper veins just as it did before the surface veins developed. Lasers can also be used to eliminate blood vessels on the upper eyelids along with redness, a common side effect of blepharoplasty. A fortunate and not uncommon side effect of laser treatment to the under-eye area is *neocollagenesis* or the synthesis of new collagen resulting in thicker, brighter, less crepey skin.

The treatment was not entirely painless, but it was quick. A pair of metal ocular shields were placed directly on my eyeballs to shield them from the Excel V laser. This was not something I expected and after they were plucked off at the end of the procedure, my eyes felt raw and sensitive. If you wear contact lenses, I highly recommend that you leave them at home and just wear your glasses for this treatment. As for pain, underneath my eyes, there was just a stinging sensation at the point of contact with the laser.

The elimination of the larger veins on my temples was more painful however. No topical anesthetic was applied as this constricts the vessels, making it more difficult to treat. All in all, the procedure lasted a brief 10 to 15 minutes. Costs range between \$450 - \$750 depending on the extent of the treatment.



The ocular shields placed on the eyes prior to laser procedures.

Afterwards, the under-eye area was a bit red and swollen for a couple of days, as expected. A small scab had formed which worried me somewhat as Dr. Geronemus cautioned that there is a very small risk of scarring. But, this too went away without a trace in a few days, helped by the application of Aquaphor. The blue veins had disappeared almost immediately and I was pleased with the fast results. A follow up visit may be necessary depending on the number and size of veins.

In my case, a couple of visible blood vessels remained so a month later, I returned for a second visit. An unexpected and very pleasing side effect was that, by the time of my second treatment, the skin underneath my eyes looked smoother, thicker and thus lighter. Dr. Geronemus confirmed that this is not an uncommon side effect because when thermal energy is delivered into the dermis, as it is with lasers, you get *neocollagenesis* or the formation of new collagen. Should new veins pop up underneath my eyes, I will certainly have them treated with a laser if only for the collagen-boosting results!