

THE REAL VAMPIRE FACELIFT

Trademarked by an Alabama-based physician, the vampire facelift makes use of platelet-rich plasma to accelerate the inherent healing powers of skin.

The term “Vampire Facelift” has already become such a part of our common vocabulary that if you Google it, you’ll find 134,000 pages that use that phrase. And yet, it was only last year that Charles Runels, M.D., first came up with the idea of calling the procedure by that name.

“I first conceived it in April of 2010, and when I first Googled ‘Vampire Facelift’ it got zero hits,” says Dr. Runels, who practices outside of Mobile, Ala. So he coined the term as a way to popularize (and protect) a procedure he had begun using, which combined the facial filler Juvéderm with something called PRP, which stands for platelet-rich plasma.

PRP is a form of blood plasma, the liquid component of blood that carries the red and white blood cells to their destinations. Platelets are tiny cell fragments in blood that contain growth factors, natural substances that encourage cellular growth (it’s what helps heal wounds).

At the time Dr. Runels came up with the Vampire Facelift® he was trying to find a way to standardize the use of Juvéderm, a hyaluronic acid that is injected by cosmetic surgeons to plump up sagging faces and stimulate the production of collagen. As we age we lose collagen, a protein that holds your skin tissue together, so our faces lose volume and sag.

“My approach [as a cosmetic doctor] is to make someone beautiful,” he says. “The product [Juvéderm] doesn’t define how it should be used. If you hand a syringe of Juvéderm to ten cosmetic or plastic docs, and they have a patient with [the same problem], would they do the same procedure? The odds are low.”

Dr. Runels’ method was to mix Juvéderm with PRPs, which dramatically enhanced the effects, since the growth factors in the PRP accelerated the production of collagen. He then standardized the process and made it available to other doctors. “The idea is to give the patients something more predictable,” he says.

Andre Berger, M.D., a Beverly Hills cosmetic surgeon who uses Dr. Runels’ methodology, says that using PRP “is a treatment that



Dr. Charles Runels, is a cosmetic surgeon in Mobile, Ala. In April 2010, he coined the term “Vampire Facelift” to describe the process of combining the facial filler Juvéderm with platelet-rich plasma extracted from blood.

you can use in conjunction with a whole host of other treatments, for their growth factors. I’ll use it for fat transfer, facial injection, face-tightening procedures, and so forth.... All you are going to do is to enhance collagen production.”

In the case of the Vampire Facelift®, however, Dr. Berger uses the kit that Dr. Runels supplies for those who employ his procedure. “I learned how to do this years ago, but at that point it was all manual—which I did, but it’s a pain and takes a lot of time. It’s easier to use with pre-packaged kits.”

As for Dr. Runels, he is off and running with his next viral hit, The Vampire Breast Lift. Same principles, different body part. 🍷

OLD YOU



NEW YOU



Female patient before and after a “vampire facelift.”