



Tomatoes are rich in lycopene.



BOTOX: Before and after.



TEMPORARY: Botox works wonders but only lasts a few months.

Pictures: AFP

Anti-ageing ins and outs

Society has for some time been obsessed with looking youthful. We chatted to some experts about the options available for a younger look



Almonds – lots of vitamin E.



Spinach – plenty of vitamin K.

Going under the knife

Having a facelift is probably the most traumatic and drastic anti-ageing option. The procedure is painful. An incision is made, usually at the hairline near the temple and continues in front of the ear and around the earlobe and into the hair. The muscles and sagging tissue are tightened, excess skin is removed and the remaining skin is repositioned to create a more youthful look. The surgeon will close the incision

with stitches or metal clips on the scalp. The procedure can take two to three hours.

The recovery time is two to three weeks. Be prepared to spend the first week on your back because anything else may be too painful. Expect to be bruised, swollen and in pain. Many people lose sensation in the areas around the incisions for several months.

The results of a facelift can be quite dramatic and can last two to 10 years.

Fillers and Botox

Chatting to Dr Maureen Allem, founder of **Skin Renewal** and one of the most experienced nonsurgical anti-ageing specialists in the country, it's clear that Botox and fillers are far less painful, invasive and risky procedures. Using a cannula procedure –

basically a blunt needle that doesn't tear tissue – Allem transforms sagging skin and wrinkles.

Botox and fillers, like a liquid facelift, can transform one's looks in minutes and without surgery. A trained therapist will simply inject a small amount of Botox in key areas to give you a natural and youthful look.

Botox lasts up to six months. Fillers can last for up to two years.

“It's important that you go to someone who has experience and is an expert,” says Allem. “There are so many people out there who don't really know what they're doing and don't get the proper training.” Going to a skin specialist or plastic surgeon would obviously be the best option. A major upside of Botox is that the effects wear off after a few months so if, by chance, something does go wrong you will return to normal.

Creams, potions and lotions

Remember that a good quality anti-ageing cream will cost more than one that is supermarket-bought. “The stuff you buy in shops are great as moisturisers,” says Allem. “But they only contain about 10% peptides.” A good cream will have about 97% peptides.

Peptides, proteins and retinoic acid rejuvenate the skin. Creams that contain these – usually prescribed by doctors – have wonderful anti-ageing properties and are pain-free.

One of the latest imports is the Swiss Apple stem cell range, which derives its ingredients from a rare apple tree. Scientists realised that the skin of the apples it produced didn't shrivel. They isolated the chemicals responsible and now have a product that works magic.

Diet and lifestyle

The food you consume can make a huge difference in how you look and feel. Certain foods can fight diseases like cancer and heart disease. A healthy diet is the key to vitality and longevity.

Spinach packs a mean nutrient punch for a leafy green. Loaded with vitamin K and calcium, this delicious green food will keep your bones strong and keep your eyes healthy too. Phytonutrients in spinach help fight cancer and disease.

Curry is another age-fighting powerhouse. Curry powder helps your body fight the free radicals responsible for cell damage and ageing. Curry also helps prevent Alzheimer's.

Lycopene in tomatoes protects the skin from oxidation that results from sun damage and leads to wrinkles. Drizzle tomatoes with olive oil and you'll be sure to absorb all the lycopene needed.

Goji berries are one of Madonna's secret anti-ageing weapons. Goji berries have one of the highest concentrations of anti-oxidants. Take a small handful a day to ensure that you're equipped with an arsenal

against free radicals.

Almonds are loaded with vitamin E and if you consume one handful a day you will provide your skin with the required dosage to help maintain supple, smooth and soft skin.