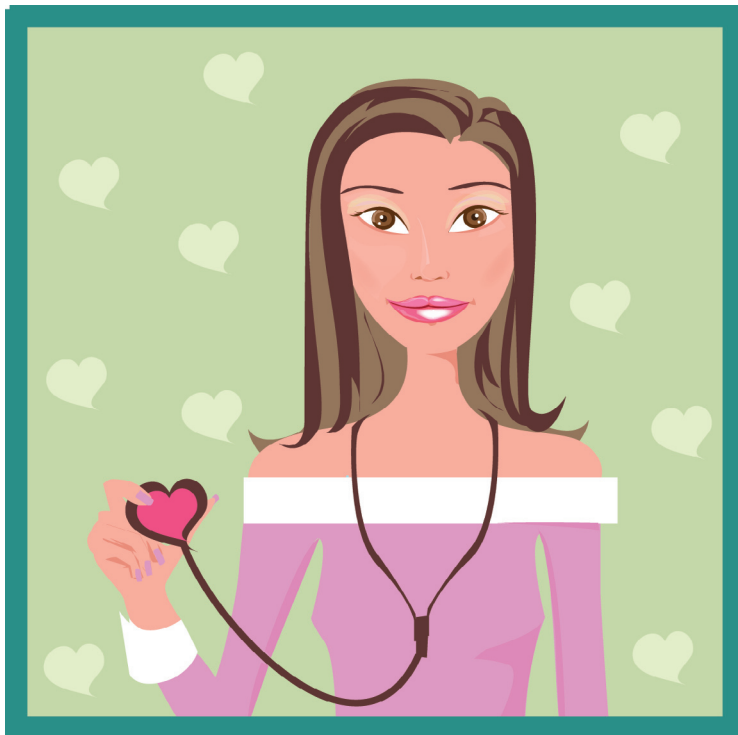


MY STORY

Screen test

BY REBECCA BILLINGS (A.K.A. DR. DATE)



Two summers ago, I was assigned a segment on facial rejuvenation treatments for a radio show I was hosting. Since I don't like to speak about topics I haven't experienced, I decided to test out a few treatments, while I was researching my story. As a 45-year-old woman, my face was starting to reveal my age, but as an on-air host it wasn't really a concern. However, since I was considering moving back into the world of television [Rebecca Billings is a relationship and sexual therapist and also known as Dr. Date], I knew that it could be a problem – the camera shows every shadow, wrinkle and line. Luckily I'm of East Indian descent. Although I suffered from acne as a teen, my dark skin has retained its elasticity and kept me looking younger than my age.

I chose Dr. Vera Madison, a doctor in Toronto, because she injects the substance into the horizontal lines on your forehead, whereas many doctors only inject into the frown lines (vertical lines between your eyebrows). I was concerned about looking refreshed, not frozen. Dr. Madison asked me to make expressions; she felt the facial muscles I was using and assessed how best to relax them, so that I looked natural.


A Toronto TV show host gives facial fillers a little face time of their own.

The Botox injection gave me an instant lift, especially above my eyes. The full effects were visible within two weeks. The upper half of my face looked amazing – I was practically glowing. But the lower half of my face was showing my age, particularly in my smile lines. A few months later, Dr. Madison injected fillers into the nasolabial folds (from my nose to the corners of my mouth). Some doctors will just inject the filler, but Dr. Madison really massaged the product into the folds, while asking me to make different facial expressions, ensuring the product was in the fold and didn't creep into my cheek, which can define the line even more and make you look like a chipmunk.

My makeup artist noticed a big difference. She knows my face intimately. Before the procedure, she would cover every shadow, wrinkle and crease so the camera wouldn't pick up on it. Now, I no longer need as much makeup. I feel great about myself.

Now when I get Botox injections, the effects last a little longer, because I've already trained the muscles to work in a better way.

As a relationship and sexual therapist, I know how important it is for women to feel desirable and good about themselves. Whether it's changing your hair colour, working out or indulging in cosmetic enhancement, if it boosts your confidence, that's going to help you in all aspects of your life.

Rebecca Billings hosts *Between the Sheets* (W Network) and *Prenup Challenge* (VisionTV). 

DO YOU HAVE A TRUE STORY TO TELL? Email us at letters@elevatemagazine.com, fax us at 416-869-3008 or send your story to Elevate Magazine, 365 Bloor St. E., Suite 1902, Toronto, Ont., M4W 3L4.