

FDA Approves J&J's Collagen Facial Filler

Injectable Product

Is First Offering

Of Aesthetics Unit

By RHONDA L. RUNDLE

July 2, 2008; Page D3

[Johnson & Johnson](#) said it has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration clearance to market Evolence, an injectable collagen for treating facial wrinkles. Physicians and analysts said the product marks the first significant foray by a major U.S. pharmaceutical company into the cosmetic-medicine field.



Getty Images

Evolence is the initial product for J&J's new aesthetics group, created in response to growing demand for appearance-enhancing medical treatments. Evolence, intended for the correction of moderate to deep facial wrinkles and folds, was developed by ColBar LifeScience, an Israeli company J&J acquired two years ago. Evolence has been available in many other countries since 2004.

Evolence is emerging in the U.S. during an economic downturn that has hit cosmetic dermatology among other luxury services. "They couldn't have picked a worse time," said [Kenneth Beer](#), a West Palm Beach, Fla., dermatologist and J&J consultant. "But J&J isn't worried about quarter to quarter. The most salient feature of this is that it's the first time one of the 'biggs' has gotten into the sandbox."

The world-wide market for so-called dermal fillers is increasingly crowded. In the U.S., it is dominated by [Medicis Pharmaceutical Corp.](#)'s Restylane and [Allergan Inc.](#)'s Juvederm.

J&J claims Evolence is "a breakthrough in aesthetics," because it is made from "naturally sourced collagen," unlike Restylane and Juvederm. Evolence is manufactured with a patented technology and uses tendons harvested from pigs in the U.S. and Australia.

Pig and Pocketbook Issues

Physicians will welcome the arrival of a new product, but it's likely to be a "minor product, at least initially" said Ronny Gal, an analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. "Porcine products historically haven't done well, and many people prefer lab-grown products," he said. Evolence hasn't been a "category killer" in Europe, where hyaluronic acid-based products like Juvederm and Restylane are more popular, he added.

Dermatologists and patients may be disappointed that Evolence's FDA label allows the company to claim that its effects last only six months. Some had anticipated a label of one year or even

longer. Many patients who are using facial fillers to temporarily erase or reduce wrinkles are suffering from so-called wallet fatigue and are looking for longer-lasting treatments. Juvederm recently received FDA permission to claim its product is effective for a year, although some physicians say the study was flawed.

Monica Neufang, a J&J spokeswoman, said the company is filing additional data with the FDA to try to obtain a 12-month label. She said patients should feel comfortable with Evolence because many medical products, including heart valves, are derived from porcine materials. The pig tendons used in Evolence are harvested from animals raised for human consumption and not specifically for medical use, she said. The price of Evolence will be similar to or perhaps slightly more than the prices of rival products, she added.

Dr. Beer, who has injected Evolence outside the U.S., says it causes less post-injection bruising and swelling than Restylane or Juvederm. Noel Solish, a Toronto dermatologist who has used Evolence for about two years, says it can cause lumps under the skin if it is injected too superficially and not massaged immediately. J&J says it has developed a specialized training program for "accurate results."

Write to Rhonda L. Rundle at rhonda.rundle@wsj.com