

Vavelta may be the new wave in anti-aging treatment

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Vavelta, developed by a British biomedical company called Intercytex, is at least four years away from being available in the U.S.

The newest wrinkle in anti-aging treatments might make some youth-obsessed oldsters think twice about leaping into the treatment face first.

Vavelta is a clear liquid derived from baby foreskins, donated by mothers whose babies have just been circumcised. The liquid is injected into adult skin damaged by acne or burns.

The results look promising so far, but it's [a bit](#) early to get too excited. Vavelta, developed by a British biomedical company called Intercytex, is at least four years away from being available in the U.S. If it does win [FDA](#) approval, chances are Vavelta would be used only in the treatment of burns and acne, at least initially, a company spokesperson says.

The treatment, which claims to be permanent, is different from skin fillers like [Juvederm](#) and [Restylane](#) because it contains tiny skin cells, called fibroblasts. The cells rejuvenate and revitalize damaged, aging skin from the inside by actually repopulating the lower skin layers with millions of healthy young skin cells.

Dermatologists on this side of the Pond find the idea intriguing - but say it still needs fine-tuning.

"The technique of injecting cells that make collagen, rather than collagen itself, is a very interesting idea," says [Dr. Judith Hellman](#), a Manhattan-based dermatologist who specializes in various anti-aging skin treatments. "Normally, if you inject something into the body that is foreign, the body rejects it. But fibroblasts do not elicit such a reaction in the body."

Calling it "one step after stem cell," [Dr. Eric Siegel](#), dermatologist and founder of the Millburn Laser Center in Millburn, [N.J.](#), says further tests on Vavelta are needed.

"There is a lot of potential downside to a treatment like this, such as infection," he says.

Mothers and babies are screened before the foreskins are accepted to be used in Vavelta, says a Intercytex spokesperson, adding that a Vavelta treatment costs the equivalent of about \$850.

"It is all about using neonatal tissue rather than fetal tissue," Siegel says. "You are still talking about using human tissue, which means some groups will be upset about it."



Noting that Intercytex is in talks now with the FDA about bringing Vavelta here, a consultant to the company notes that one foreskin makes enough cells for hundreds of thousands of treatments because the cells can be grown in cultures and then frozen.

While they're waiting for the viability of Vavelta to be decided by the FDA, wrinkle-conscious Americans can still try other unorthodox anti-aging treatments for the next few years.

Those who aren't squeamish about, well, poop, might take advantage of a one-of-a-kind facial that combines "sanitized" nightingale droppings with natural oils to hydrate the skin. Called the Geisha Facial -- it's been used by [Japan's geishas](#) for centuries -- the treatment is said to break down dead skin cells and draw out any bacteria from the cells more gently than acid peels. Among the celebs said to have tried (and loved) the Geisha Facial is [Victoria Beckham](#).

Another unusual celebrity beauty regimen is "cupping," an ancient Chinese acupressure method said to be favored by [Gwyneth Paltrow](#). There's also leech therapy, reportedly used by [Demi Moore](#) to detoxify her body.

The rest of us can resort to more old-fashioned remedies.

"There are things you can do to keep your skin young as we age and the fibroblasts take a little nap, which means we have less collagen," says Dr. [Flor Mayoral](#), a dermatologist who researches new anti-aging treatments. "Take antioxidants and vitamins, don't smoke, get enough rest and eat well. You may age a bit more slowly than your friends, but the truth is that we are all going to continue to age - if we are lucky."

Finally, there's the anti-aging remedy that no sun worshipper wants to hear about.

"I tell my patients, there are no miracles in any jars," says Dr. Siegel. "The best anti-wrinkle cream around is a very good sunblock."