



Asia HealthPartners lobby

## ▶▶ Aesthetic Advantage

Preserve and enhance your essential beauty with a personalised aesthetic treatment at Asia HealthPartners

Colin Tham, consultant plastic surgeon and director of aesthetics



“AESTHETICS IS ONE OF THE MOST challenging areas,” says Colin Tham, consultant aesthetic and plastic surgeon at Asia HealthPartners, “It’s easy to take something abnormal and make it better, but how do you improve on the normal?”

This interesting metaphysical question is one that an increasing number of people are asking. Public opinion is more accepting of adding an extra touch of glamour to the contours of face and body. Market forces are driving advances in aesthetics at a much faster rate than other forms of surgery. Recovery time is much improved, side effects such as bruising and scars are dramatically lower, and better results are achieved from the same procedures. Yet for doctors like Tham, there is much more at stake than technological advances.

“You have to be passionate,” he says, “Otherwise there is just no point.” Eloquent, highly skilled and approachable, Tham has a reputation for straight talking that means

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Vanessa Phua, physician with an interest in aesthetic medicine

he sometimes turns down work. He has advised patients against procedures he feels would not help them, proposing alternative treatments in their place.

Vaser Liposelection, an upgrade on traditional liposuction, is a classic example. The procedure introduces ultrasound into the classic fluid-in, fat-out system. An ultrasound probe melts the fat cells, enabling the surgeon to suck them out without damaging surrounding blood vessels and nerves. The shortened downtime has in its most extreme example allowed a patient to return to work the evening after afternoon surgery; however, Tham usually advises two days.

Body contouring, however advanced, is not suitable in all cases. Patients have to be realistic about what they want to achieve, and severely overweight clients are usually directed towards options such as stomach banding first.

In other cases, the converse is true. Doctors advise a less drastic treatment in place of the traditional surgery. Non-invasive treatments are particularly in vogue at the moment, with an American study finding a 750 per cent increase in their use compared to a 120 per cent increase in their invasive alternatives.

At Asia HealthPartners, Vanessa Phua, a physician with an interest in aesthetic medicine, is on hand to introduce the wide spectrum of non-surgical treatments on offer. With a background in ophthalmology, specialising in the eye and surrounding area, she was first drawn towards oculoplastics – procedures on the eyelid and surrounding structure. “I had the most interest in this area,” she says. “Then I expanded to the whole person: aesthetics. It’s a very holistic approach, incorporating anti-ageing techniques, nutritional supplements and so on.”

Her treatments range from botox and fillers through to minimally invasive procedures. One of these is threadlifts: This minimally invasive procedure has a downtime of three to five days (compared to about a month for a conventional facelift). It uses absorbable threads with tiny barbs that stimulate the tissues. Phua describes it as a three-dimensional restoration because it promotes the production of hyaluronic acid, a naturally occurring chemical that keeps the skin hydrated and fresh looking. The patient is left with improved skin tone and a fresher complexion.

For patients who want more immediate results, Phua is one of only 35 or so practitioners in Singapore certified to carry out thermage: non-surgical face and body contouring using FDA-approved, patented ThermoCool radio-frequency system to promote the growth of new collagen. With results



that evolve over three to six months, it has zero downtime and is suitable for those who want skin to look a little tighter.

Describing her personal relationship with her clients, Phua explains, “They put their trust in me to beautify them ... not to make them a supermodel, but to look like a healthy, radiant version of themselves.”

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