

Racegoers splash cash to go wrinkle-free with Botox

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BRIGHT dresses and dazzling hats are no longer enough for some Spring Racing Carnival fans, with Botox and face fillers increasingly other prerequisites.

Some doctors say a growing obsession with "freeze frame" faces has created a new phobia - "wrinklerexia".

Melbourne plastic surgeons report a rising number of women - and some men - have lined up for pre-carnival treatments.

Punters aged 20 to 70 are paying thousands of dollars for procedures to ward off Mother Nature's lines and sags, they say.

Wrinkles are ironed out, lips puckered, eye bags removed and cheek hollows filled in weeks before the first horse hits the racetrack.

Ascot Vale mother-of-four Sharon Muir, 44, had her lips and skin around her mouth, eyes and forehead done especially for the carnival.

And she said she was not alone among her group of friends.

"When you get to my age, the way you look doesn't match the way you feel inside, so a bit of treatment like Botox tends to match it up," Ms Muir said.

"The spring races are a big thing we go to every year and we tend to make a big effort."

She saved \$50 a week towards the \$1670 procedure, which lasted three to nine months.

Plastic surgeon Dr Chris Moss, of Liberty Belle Medical Skin Rejuvenation Centre, said this was the busiest time of the year.



"What we've realised is that the most natural way to rejuvenate someone is to replenish volume," Dr Moss said.

Other surgeons said the safe and non-intrusive nature of the treatment was behind its rising popularity.

Several reported a doubling in pre-Spring Carnival bookings for Botox and fillers, making it the No.1 event for "special occasion" treatment.

But "wrinklerexia" has many doctors on alert. Some say they have even turned away Botox-bingeing women.

Dr Douglas McManamny, of the Aesthetic Surgery and Laser Centre, said he had upset some patients by refusing to treat them.

"There are some people whose perception of their appearance is distorted," he said. "These are people who I don't think are appropriate to have Botox."