

# Thin-injections

FOR THOSE WHO PREFER TO FINE-TUNE THEIR FIGURE IN A DOCTOR'S OFFICE RATHER THAN AT THE GYM, NEW FAT-DISSOLVING INJECTIONS OFFER A SCALPEL-FREE ALTERNATIVE. BUT ARE THEY SAFE? AIDA LEISENRING INVESTIGATES WHETHER THESE METHODS ARE WORTH A SHOT

## THE PROMISE

"I have a patient who lost 13 inches from her waist in 20 sessions," says osteopathic physician Lionel Bissoon, a mesotherapist who practices in LA., New York City, and Palm Beach. There are enough similar anecdotes to keep the roughly 20 U.S. mesotherapy doctors-only physicians can perform mesotherapy-double booked (New Jersey-based osteopathic physician **Marion Shapiro** treats 150 clients a week). The treatment isn't painless, though: To ensure that weight loss is evenly distributed, mesotherapists administer multiple injections, one inch apart. The overweight may require thousands of shots over as many as 30 weekly treatments, but Shapiro reports that 20 percent of her patients find that their pants are looser after one visit of roughly 70 shots. "In general, patients drop one size after four sessions," she says. But some doctors believe it's mesotherapy's requisite diet and exercise plan that makes the difference. "If you refuse to diet and exercise, I won't treat you," Bissoon says.

While mesotherapy has been touted as an option for treating obesity and sculpting the body, Lipostabil targets only small amounts of fat, like patches of cellulite, love handles, and fat under the eyes and chin. Manhattan-based plastic surgeon Thomas Loeb, MD, who has been administering Lipostabil shots for one year, says he smooths cellulite lumps with extreme caution: "I use a diluted formula because I still don't know the nature of lecithin. What if it shrinks other types of cells?" New York City dermatologist Howard Sobel, MD, won't administer Lipostabil: "What if you get Lipostabil in your thigh, then you stand up and it gravitates downward, affecting other fat cells and creating an indentation?"