

CONVERSATIONS

Conversations with Dr. Christie Prendergast

Interview by Sheldon Baker

Christie Prendergast, MD, is a double-board certified plastic surgeon in Los Angeles and founder of the Beauty Matrix™, a personalized treatment strategy that utilizes technology, biological data and professional expertise to optimize patient outcomes. Throughout her years of practice, Dr. Prendergast observed that standardized approaches to aesthetics were lacking innovation, inclusivity, as well as often disregarding the patient experience and personal goals. Drawing from evidence-based practices across both traditional and holistic medicine, nutrition, lifestyle and genetics, she developed a multi-modal approach that is results-oriented and prioritizes skin health optimization, maintenance and damage prevention to minimize or delay the need for drastic interventions wherever possible. By looking at the full picture, Dr. Prendergast addresses beauty from both inside and out with the patient experiencing a highly individualized, productive and more pleasant treatment journey along the way. (*Altern Ther Health Med*. 2025;31(1):62-64).

Sheldon Baker is an InnoVision contributing editor. His freelance editorial content can also be found in several lifestyle publications, and as CEO of Baker Dillon Group LLC, he has created numerous brand marketing communications and public relations campaigns for health and wellness organizations. Contact him at Sheldon@NutraInk.com.

Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine (ATHM): Discuss your background as a wellness thought leader.

Christie Prendergast, MD: Involving wellness into my practice approach not only felt like a necessity, but more so, an important piece to the puzzle that was often overlooked in this area. For decades, the plastic surgery and aesthetics industry has exclusively tackled things from the outside. This never really made sense to me, particularly when there are multiple ways to approach a patient's aesthetic goals. Throughout my professional practice, I have come across a range of patients with various health conditions, chronic diseases and predispositions to aging. There is a strong consensus in the literature that there are several proven beneficial approaches to optimizing and maintaining your

health span, longevity and beauty. Not only is this approach more scientifically-driven, but also inclusive due to being entirely personalized to the individual's goals and objectives. In addition to serving my patients better, I have also found this path to be an exciting ride filled with self-discovery, personal growth, and making intentional choices to create a balanced and fulfilling life that's uniquely mine.

My path to becoming a double board-certified plastic surgeon wasn't exactly a straight shot. I started with limited privileges and opportunities and had little previous exposure to the medical world. On the other hand, I also didn't have preconceived notions or expectations, which not only allowed me move at my own pace but to also question things I didn't understand and think more critically throughout the process. Today, I consider myself fortunate to juggle the roles of surgeon, entrepreneur, and mother. While keeping up with the physical, mental, and emotional demands of life and work isn't easy, it's always prompted me to seek out opportunities to optimize every aspect of my health, using modalities that are realistic, achievable and of course efficient in gracefully tackling the aging process. I was inspired to dive deeper, refine my skills, and help others to also achieve all that they have set out to accomplish. As a natural evolution, my practice has grown to practice areas that improve the quality of life in my community through education, innovation, guided science, and bio-optimization. I really believe that a personalized approach to medicine is the most efficient way to serve my patients and allow for a more meaningful impact on their health journey.

ATHM: You focus on something called bio-optimization. What is that?

Dr. Prendergast: I find that the term wellness is becoming gradually outdated, because it is so broadly used and can really encompass anything. Whether they are evidence-based or not, many of these practices are just trends that have been amplified and subsequently legitimized by social media, often having the opposite effect on well-being. This is why I prefer the term bio-optimization. While I like to take inspiration from the world of bio-hacking, as a physician, I

get to combine clinical data, innovative technologies and specialized diagnostics to deliver precision medicine. Bio-optimization focuses on personalized, science-backed strategies. It's all about continuous improvement and achieving the best possible version of ourselves.

ATHM: Please explain The Beauty Matrix™.

Dr. Prendergast: The Beauty Matrix™ is a methodology I came up with and use in my practice today and addresses the many aspects of aging and beauty. It utilizes an algorithm that helps my patients truly understand their objectives and guides them towards the types of treatments that are most ideally suited to them, based on their aesthetic concerns and personal goals, current state of health, lifestyle and of course genetic skin and age-related predispositions. The Beauty Matrix™ allows me to consider all of these factors to create a personalized plan for both corrective and maintenance treatments. As a result, the strategy is more results-oriented and leads to better outcomes in a shorter amount of time, while simultaneously mitigating the need for more drastic interventions down the road.

ATHM: Discuss your strategy for utilizing neurotoxins to strategically soften wrinkles.

Dr. Prendergast: Ever since I came into this industry, I have always questioned the use of neuromodulators as an anti-aging strategy. The fact is that facial paralysis doesn't really slow down the aging process. While it can be a useful tool for a specific situation, in the end it's more of a temporary fix vs. a long-term solution, since it doesn't always offer a great return on investment. Besides that, we also shouldn't forget that facial expressions are so important for human connection. There's even research showing how crucial they are for child development. I'm sure I speak for several moms when I say that sometimes our kids need to see us scowl. The main goal with neurotoxins should be to prevent wrinkles at rest and soften the harshness of certain expressions as we age. But what I'm really passionate about is improving skin quality, boosting collagen and elastin, and softening the interface between skin and muscle, which all ties back to overall skin health. Many of my patients are actors and to them, maintaining their facial expressions are an absolute priority. So, I personally prefer to use neurotoxins selectively, ensuring we always keep the bigger aesthetic picture in mind.

ATHM: What are the various neuromodulator products?

Dr. Prendergast: Currently neuromodulators on the U.S. market include botox, dysport, juveau, daxxify, and xeomin. Each neurotoxin has slightly different chemical properties that have pros and cons to be discussed with your physician.

ATHM: Is there a natural alternative to Botox?

Dr. Prendergast: Absolutely. There is a lot of confusion around this topic that needs to be clarified. Botox works by inhibiting nerve signals to the muscles, causing temporary paralysis. One example of a natural alternative is Argireline, a peptide that mimics Botox by inhibiting neurotransmitter release at the neuromuscular junction, creating a similar effect. Argireline is safer and can reduce wrinkles by up to 48% with twice-daily treatment over four weeks. However, there's a catch. The absorption of this large peptide can be tricky, and this is a reduction, but not what we see in all patients. This highlights the importance of context in developing effective and personalized anti-aging strategies. The absorption and utilization of this alternative is not the same for everyone, making it beneficial for some and useless to others. Thus, the need for expertise in the aging process and a deep understanding of each person's aging process along with the science behind therapeutic compounds.

ATHM: What is the most common plastic surgery procedure for men or women?

Dr. Prendergast: According to the American Society of Plastic Surgery's 2023 report, the top three plastic surgery procedures in the U.S. were liposuction, breast augmentation, and abdominoplasty. On a global scale, the International Society of Plastic Surgeons revealed that liposuction, breast augmentation, and eyelid surgery were the most popular procedures worldwide in 2022. Interestingly, the U.S. topped the charts for the highest number of procedures performed globally with a growth of 5% from 2022. Breast surgery continues to be the most common procedure for women around the world which is what I specialize in. These results have been similar for the past few years, and I predict a shift in the types of procedures that will be popular in the future as we apply a more comprehensive approach to aging.

ATHM: Are you an advocate for using dietary supplements to combat anti-aging?

Dr. Prendergast: I am a huge advocate for supplements to combat aging, however in combination with testing whenever possible. On one hand, I see how effective they can be in synergy with aesthetic treatments. Our skin is an organ, and just like any other organ, it needs proper nourishment and protection. In fact, our skin often bears the brunt of the aging process. By understanding my patients genetic susceptibilities and nutritional deficiencies, I can optimize skin health and better combat the aging process.

ATHM: There are now numerous supplements for men's and women's hair. Do you recommend it?

Dr. Prendergast: I do recommend different supplements to optimize and support hair health, but the key difference in my practice is that I personalize these recommendations for each patient. There are many factors that can contribute to

hair loss, especially in women, so a comprehensive evaluation is essential to an effective strategy that addresses the specific reasons for each individual's hair concerns. This is where I find that the one-size-fits-all supplements on the market don't provide the right dosages or compounds tailored to your specific needs.

ATHM: You have offices in Hollywood, California, and Rome. Are those the hot spots for the wellness treatments you offer?

Dr. Prendergast: Yes. Hollywood has historically been a hub for health, beauty and self-improvement, especially with celebrities often leading the way. We are at an exciting juncture in medicine now, where advancements in regenerative and AI-driven treatments are poised to revolutionize our ability to make a more profound impact on our patients - however only when used correctly. This is also where I think professional expertise will be more important than ever and require a broader and more analytical skillset. My international practice is shaped by my upbringing in Europe and Asia, as well as my love for the diverse perspectives on beauty and aging. Different cultures approach aging in their own way, but the common thread is our collective fascination with the process. This diversity keeps me curious, and one of the most interesting parts of my job is constantly learning about beauty, aging and wellness through different lenses. Rome, in particular, is a standout not only for its beauty and style as a destination but also beauty research, particularly when it comes to standards of aesthetics. As the birthplace of many longevity-oriented lifestyle and cultural practices, Italy to me is an ideal location to look, work, learn and understand beauty and aging. I get to see products, technologies, and trends not yet available in the U.S., which provides me with a unique global perspective on the aesthetic market.