

BANKING ON FAT

Leading cosmetic surgeon Vijay Sharma has set up what he says is Asia's first Human Fat Tissue Bank, in Mumbai. He was taught the technique by its pioneer Georgio Fischer of Rome, who presented his research at the World Congress of the International Society of Aesthetic Surgeons in Tokyo this April.

The technique involves storing fat tissue sucked out during liposuction, for future use to fill up creases and hollows, particularly under the eyes, or injury scars. According to Sharma, fat cells can be stored in liquid form at temperatures below freezing point. The idea first struck him when a patient who had litres of fat sucked out of her waist came to him three years later to fill an injury-induced depression on her face. Fat had to be drained out from another part of her body and injected into the hollow.

The extracted fat is first washed and cleaned in normal saline and then autoclaved to remove the red blood cells. It is then poured in 10 cc syringes and placed in a deep freeze. Around 40 gm will suffice to smooth out future wrinkles in the face. At -80°C fat can be stored for up to ten years eliminating the need for liposuction and hospitalisation each time a fat injection is needed.

Novel deposits: *Dr Vijay Sharma with bottles of fat*

At present only fat from one's own body can be grafted. However, Sharma is keen on doing research to examine the possibility of grafting fat from one person on another person. He plans to start with twins.

Sharma will give each person a Fat Bank passbook to keep track of fat withdrawn and deposited. He wants to provide this service free so that clients can put their extra fat to good use in future.