

The eyelashes have it

Extensions add instant drama (the good kind, that is)

By Helen Anders

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Central Texas women seem to be battling longer, more luxurious eyelashes these days, you can blame TV's real housewives and Kardashians.

"Honestly, I think it's because of reality TV," says paramedical aesthetican Solisa Shoop, who applies eyelash extensions at Westlake Dermatology in Austin and Round Rock. "They see the 'Real Housewives of New Jersey' going out to get extensions, and then they want them."

In fact, you might have seen Shoop putting her own eyelashes on TV in 2007, when she was on "The Bachelor" with Austin's Brad Womack. She has had extensions applied from time to time — primarily when she's coaching others how to apply them, she says — but she more often uses lash serums such as Latisse and Omega EyeLash.

"It's full of nutrients and vitamins. It's similar to omega-3 cod-liver oil in your hair," she says.

Lashes starting at around \$60 (online) is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, requires a prescription and carries a warning that it could darken your eye color, although Shoop says she's never seen that happen. Klartash (about \$60 retail) is a prescription formula that does not carry such a warning.

The green-eyed Shoop says those products work, "but there's not the instant gratification that you get with extensions." Thus, extensions are in high demand, and numerous salons and doctors' offices in Central Texas do a brisk business giving women thicker eyes.

Shoop, who has been applying extensions for about 15 years, says they've long been popular with brides. Westlake Dermatology uses Novolash, a 100 percent formaldehyde-free, FDA-approved product made from synthetic not too-different from the latex used in many cosmetic brushes, she says.

Shoop likes to interview a woman before she applies lashes, finding out what sort of makeup she wears, what look she's after and how she sleeps. (Pro-drowsy — or semi-drowsy — could be a problem because it might knock the new lashes out.)

Getting a set of eyelash extensions takes about an hour, and it's considered a spa treatment.



Richard B. Brzezini photo. MEGAN CLARK PHOTOGRAPHY

During the procedure, paramedical aesthetician Solisa Shoop attaches each lash individually, putting 30 to 45 lashes on each eye.

Shoop starts by making the client comfy on her table, with a blanket roll under the knees and a neck roll as well.

In addition to making the client comfortable, the neck roll "makes sure you don't move your head when you fall asleep, which a lot of people do," she says.

Typical spa new-guy music plays as Shoop begins by applying almond oil on the skin around the eyes and placing ribbed eye strips under the eyes to draw the lower lashes down and out of the way.

Then she carefully separates one lash on which to place a new, longer lash, securing the new lash with a surgical-quality, hypoallergenic adhesive. She continues the process, adding 30 to 45 lashes on each eye.

"It's very tedious," she says. Last extensions come in various lengths. Shoop says the average eyelash is 6 to 7 millimeters long. Extensions range from 7 millimeters to 14 millimeters, the latter of which gives "the butterfly effect," Shoop says, adding that most women opt for less-dramatic, wispy lashes — something resembling what makes them look as though they have mascara on.

That said, many women, including Shoop, wear mascara even when they're wearing their extensions. Shoop emphasizes that it has to be water-based mascara. Oil-based products break down the lash adhesive.



Eyelash extensions like these on Alyssa Moore (pictured) from Westlake Dermatology come in a variety of lengths.

WESTLAKE DERMATOLOGY & COSMETIC SURGERY

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Eyelash extensions are offered at three locations:

- 8025 Bee Cave Road, Austin
- 32201 Reister Way, Austin
- 16200 Park Valley Drive, Round Rock

The lashes start at \$200 at Westlake, Shoop says, with fills recommended every two to four weeks — about 6 lashes to replace natural growth — for about \$75 (or \$225 for a package of four).

After you get the lashes, Shoop says, you need to keep them dry

for 24 hours. Then it's fine to use water-based mascara. Eyeliner is OK, she says, because it "won't touch the lashes. Aside from that, as long as you don't wash your face into your pillow and rip your lashes off, you should be getting 1,000

NEW AT THE FOUR SEASONS

Even five-star hotels like the Four Seasons Austin are taking their spa menu to new lengths. The Spa (www.fourseasons.com/austin/spa) at this luxury locale recently added professional eyelash extensions to the extensive list of treatments. In appointments that take less than 30 minutes, licensed aestheticians apply individual synthetic eyelashes in a variety of lengths, colors and thicknesses directly to the natural eyelash using a special adhesive.

According to Spa Director Mary-Kate Piotrowski, the introduction of this sought-after service has brought in a variety of clients:

"Customers have ranged from brides getting ready for their wedding day to those who just want to boost the day-to-day look of their eyelashes in a natural way," said Piotrowski. Prices range from \$35 to \$195, and results can last up to six weeks. For more information about eyelash extensions or to schedule an appointment, call 512-810-

— Amy Gabriel



GlossyPARTIES

Latinitas Charity Photo Exhibit

Mexican American Cultural Center, June 9

Latinitas hosted a Charity Photo Exhibit and Auction at the Kinross-Sheraton Mexican American Cultural Center. The work of seven top-flight photographers was on display, as were photos by four Latinitas photographers. Latinitas' mission is "to empower Latinx youths using anti-aid technology. Latinitas envisions that all Latinx will become strong and confident in their image."

1. Megan Clark and Karie Lee
2. Brooke Masullo, Executive Director Laura Doremy Gonzalez, Bill Lobo and Becky Arreaga
3. Pilar Daugherty and Carmencita Echeve
4. Hannei Yang Hansen and Simin Doh
5. Bobby Yamanaka and Marry Gilbert
6. Paulina Altierra and Jessica Gomez-Duarte
7. Verónica Ruiz and Anny Aljette