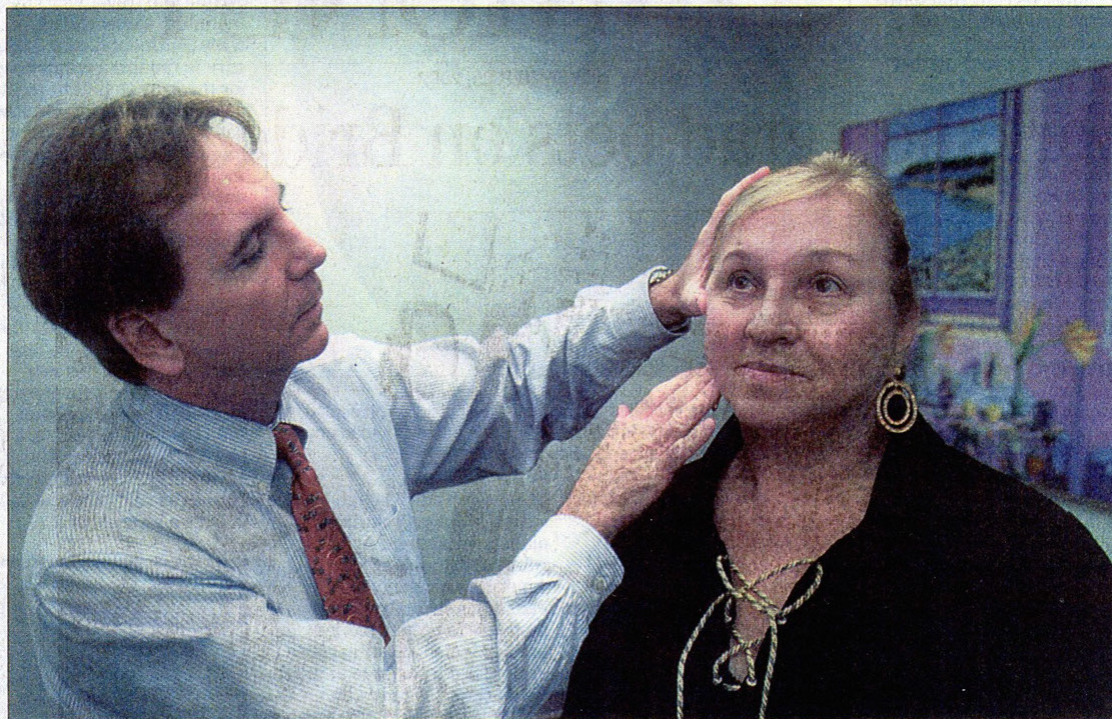


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**WOMAN WISE**

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Mike Ross/Connecticut Post

**Before:** Fairfield plastic surgeon Dr. Joseph O'Connell consults with patient Mary Christine Vancho of Easton and explains how he will improve the area around her eyes. The 63-year-old widow and former nurse wants to "meet the world feeling young."

# Forever young

## More and more, older women embracing plastic surgery to turn back time

By **PAULA CONWAY**  
Correspondent

**M**ary Christine Vancho isn't on the prowl for a husband and she's not trying to get that extra edge climbing the corporate ladder. In fact, Vancho, a 63-year-old widow, former nurse and resident of Easton represents the latest trend in cosmetic surgery: people who have procedures for the sole purpose of feeling better about themselves.

As she embarks on her next adventure in life — as a travel writer — she wants to have the self-confidence to explore these new horizons.

"I want to feel refreshed, to go out and meet the world feeling young," she says while sitting in the waiting room of the Fairfield office of Dr. Joseph O'Connell.

"I feel good about myself, but want to look younger, so why not turn back the clock a little?," she says.



Christian Abraham/Connecticut Post

**After:** Mary Christine Vancho a few weeks following her plastic surgery.

woman, whose husband had recently passed away and she was entering the second phase of her life, planning extensive travel with new friends.

"It was like watching a light come awake in a person, allowing them to feel good about themselves," he says.

O'Connell, who is in his early 40s and is chief of plastic surgery and director of the Plastic Surgery Center at Bridgeport Hospital, begins his initial discussion with Vancho by asking if she is in good health, has any outstanding conditions and what her previous surgeries have been.

"With all patients, safety is first," he says. "Older patients tend to have preexisting conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes or other medical problems, which we need to identify for the overall safety of the patient and which may cause us to modify our plan."

Vancho has slight hypertension, arthritis and she's a bit overweight. When he asks her about her weight, she answers that she doesn't intend to