



GERRY MOONEY

SINEAD GALLAGHER

Sinead Gallagher, 37, is a registered nurse and co-owner of Renew Aesthetic Clinic. Born in Dublin, she lives in Naas, Co Kildare, with her husband Fergal and their three sons

I woke up at 6.30 this morning with my three-year-old Matthew jumping into the bed beside me and cuddling me. He told me he missed his daddy, and asked if he would be home very soon because he'd just heard a helicopter. My husband is a commandant in the Irish Army; he's currently serving in the Lebanon on a peacekeeping mission. We Skype him once a week — he loves seeing the kids. It's difficult to manage everything at home, especially with my 22-month-old twin boys, Joe and Hugh. But I have a brilliant childminder, who lives with me.

It's great that I don't have to worry about dropping the kids anywhere. We go downstairs, and the boys will have their milk and brekkie. I tend not to eat very much because every time I sit down they want my food — a spoon of Weetabix, or whatever I'm having. I end up sharing my breakfast. I usually prepare the dinner in the morning because it's important that they eat well. I leave the house around half eight.

I get into Renew Clinic around half nine. The day starts at 10. It's an aesthetic clinic, which means we do non-surgical procedures — everything from laser hair removal to skin peels to Botox and fillers and endermologie, which is for cellulite and inch loss. It's really effective, and it's one of our most popular treatments, especially in the

summer when people are heading off on their holidays, and then it picks up before Christmas too.

Jeanette Dunne and I have been in business together for five years. We're both nurses, and we only have nurses working here. We met when we were training in St Vincent's Hospital. We did a start-your-own-business course and we thought there was a niche for a clinic led by nurses. Because this industry is so unregulated, it's important to make sure that you're in safe hands. If people are nervous about something, I always say they should go to about four different places and see what's right for them.

Jeanette and I both do the work ourselves; we're very hands-on. I turn business away all the time because it will come back to haunt you if you don't treat people accordingly. If we don't feel something is appropriate for someone, we won't do it. That's our ethos, and we stick to it. People will come in and say, 'I want more Botox on my lips' and I'll look at them and say, 'No, you don't need any more.' Often they get irate and say, 'Well I want it, and I'm going to pay for it.' We say 'Sorry, we won't do it,' because they're an advert for us. Just because somebody wants it done, doesn't mean it's the right thing. Sometimes you'll have someone who is a size four and she wants endermologie. I'll say, 'You don't have any cellulite and you've no inches to lose,

so I won't treat you.' Then you'll have heavy people coming in, wanting to just lie there and have the treatment. That's not going to work either — you have to exercise and eat properly as well. It's an add-on, but it's brilliant for areas that are resistant to exercise, like the backs of your arms, saddle bags and love handles. It helps to break the fat down further.

I do consultations and some treatments. Jeanette does fillers, and we have a doctor who comes in to do Botox. She's been injecting Botox for 20 years. Botox wears off after three months, and fillers after eight months. If anyone is nervous, we say try the filler first because it's a much more natural look.

When people come in to us, they're nervous. They don't know what the outcome is going to be. They're putting their trust in us. They want to feel better about themselves. We have a lot of solicitors and doctors coming in, and the mainstay of people would be professional women who have a disposable income. We notice that these women aren't coming in as frequently nowadays. They stretch out treatments.

We have single mums who want to look better — they're trying to get back out there, and we've a lot of divorced and recently separated people who have come to a crisis and decided 'that's it, I want to feel better'. It's not only about Botox and fillers. It's about making their

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skin look better and how to enhance what they have. We see a lot of cases of adult acne. I know all about it, because I suffered from it for years. There is no reason to have spots in later life. You've enough to worry about, without acne as well. There are always treatments. We do a course of peels for bad acne.

We had a lady in who had fillers last week, in the lines from her nose to her mouth. Everyone said she looked so fresh and rested. She was delighted she didn't have to explain what she'd had done.

We have a lot of Eastern European girls coming in. Their boyfriends would come in and they'd wait for them, then they'd be the ones paying for the treatments. A lot of the Polish girls don't drink or smoke, so they spend all their money on themselves. We've had a few lap-dancers. Models come in for laser hair removal, and endermologie would be really popular with them too. Cellulite is much more prevalent when you're very thin. A lot of women never tell their husbands that they've had treatment. Often they ask, 'What will that come up as on my Visa slip?'

You see a lot of men coming in too; the sort who you'd never think would be vain. Some come in and get their Botox done and they don't tell the wife. Others would have fillers on their face. It's a lot of professional men, hairdressers, ones who are in the public eye and some of them are gay. Some men get laser hair removal on their necklines because they wear a collar and they get an irritation and stubble rash. Also, there's pressure out there in the working environment, and men are constantly trying to improve not only their intellect, but their appearance. People are trying to get jobs, and they know first impressions count.

I work late one evening a week, the other days I finish at five. I go home and spend time with my little boys. We have dinner together, I bath them and then, when they're in bed, I might crash out in front of the television. Usually, when I'm watching, I'm very observant of other people and who has had what done. There's no doubt that all the stars have had jobs done. You'll often see celebrities with a trout pout. Botched jobs happen because people are over-injecting. Volume in the upper cheeks is the big thing now. Everyone wants their cheeks injected to give them that hamster look, but why would you do it if you have perfect cheekbones? ■

In conversation with Ciara Dwyer

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