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Bigger Lips!

(That Don't Look Cray)

Thanks to recent FDA approvals and a wave of fearless millennials (hi, Kylie), lip augmentation is the second-fastest-growing facial procedure in the U.S. To ensure you don't wind up on *Botched*, consult this safety guide.

BY LAUREN BALSAMO

Know Your Options

Over the last several years, the government has green-lit various hyaluronic acid (HA) fillers for lips.

The new formulas are all similar in composition (Paul Jarrod Frank, MD, a cosmetic derm in NYC, likens the choices to Coke and Pepsi), with slight variations in longevity and density, which can determine when and how they're used. A quickie breakdown:

Restylane and Restylane-L

BEST FOR: All-over volume (they're the same basic formula, but Restylane-L is mixed with pain-preventing lidocaine)

Restylane Silk

BEST FOR: Subtle enhancements (it has smaller HA molecules)

Juvéderm Ultra XC

BEST FOR: A plush, pillowy effect

Juvéderm Volbella XC

BEST FOR: Defining the lip line (and treating fine lines around the mouth)

INSIDER INFO: It's common for derms to layer and mix different types of fillers to achieve the best result, says Whitney Bowe, MD, a celeb derm in NYC. (And if they don't, it's a sign they're probably a newbie injector, adds Dr. Frank.) For instance, a derm may use a heavier filler like Restylane in the middle of the lips for fullness and a thinner filler such as Restylane Silk at corners for slight definition.

READ THIS TO
AVOID BEAUTY
BUYER'S
REMORSE.

WHAT ARE LIP FILLERS, EXACTLY?

Let's start with what they're not: permanent. They last only about three months to a year. The kinds our derms recommend are made of hyaluronic acid—a sugar (found naturally in the body) that adds temporary volume and definition when injected into lips.

Operation: No Regrets

How to ensure you'll love your new look

DO YOUR RESEARCH

The most important step in filling your lips is finding the right injector. Browse RealSelf.com for reviews, and check out Juvéderm and Restylane's websites—both have search tabs that help locate reputable derms in your area. You want to find a board-certified derm or plastic surgeon who concentrates in facial aesthetics and has tons of experience.

That said, "you might be better off going to a nurse practitioner who does injections all day long than a derm who specializes in acne with little experience doing lips," notes Dr. Frank.

SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION

During the initial meeting, you will review your medical history, discuss your goals (subtle definition versus major volume), and learn how to prep for the day (avoid blood thinners such as NSAIDs, alcohol, and fish-oil and vitamin-E supplements for two weeks

before; they up your chances of bruising and bleeding during and after treatment, says Neil Sadick, MD, a derm in NYC). You should also request to see before-and-after photos of previous patients and ask how often the doc does fillers. There's no magic number, but if the staff can easily answer the question, it's a sign they're familiar with the procedure (for reference, Dr. Frank injects around 30 patients a day). Dr. Bowe adds that if the pro is available for same-day appointments, that's a bad sign.

BE READY TO DISH OUT SOME CASH

A plumper pout can set you back anywhere from \$300 to \$2,000. And as with most things in life, you get what you pay for. A higher price tag often means you're paying for an injector's experience. As for those coupon sites? Don't be tempted. If an office or medical spa is offering services for a fee that seems too good to be true, know that your filler may have been cut with water or saline to cover the cost (meaning your fillers may not last or could come out uneven). ■

ALL YOUR QUESTIONS—ANSWERED!

Q. How long does the procedure take?

A. Less than an hour. First, your injector will cleanse the area and apply a topical numbing cream (it needs about 20 minutes to kick in) or inject you with lidocaine. Then, "the injections themselves take 15 to 20 minutes," says Neil Sadick, MD.

Q. How bad does it hurt?

A. Most women say the lidocaine shot hurts most (like an intense bee sting). As for the filler itself, it can be best described as an immediate pricking sensation, then uncomfortable pressure as the filler moves throughout the lips.

Q. Will they look good right after?

A. You'll see immediate volume, but expect a few days of bruising and swelling (so schedule accordingly).

Q. What about the side effects?

A. You may notice some small bumps under your lips. They usually smooth

out on their own within a week or two, but if not, your injector can remove them. While rare, more serious complications (like a blood clot) can occur, so if you're experiencing significant pain or skin discoloration, see a doctor ASAP.

Q. How do I take care of them after?

A. No touching your lips for 48 hours after injections. And hold off on exercise for a few days, as it speeds up your blood flow.

Q. How do I maintain them?

A. Touch-ups every three months to a year. Why such a big window? Factors like filler consistency and lifestyle can affect longevity. For instance, in patients who are more physically active, their filler dissolves faster than in those who are more sedentary, explains Whitney Bowe, MD.

Q. What if I hate them?

A. Your doctor can dissolve the filler by injecting lips with the enzyme hyaluronidase. Most reputable derms will do this for free if you're not happy with their work.

5 WAYS TO FAKE IT

From subtle definition to full-on drama, these DIY tricks naturally pump up the volume.



CONTOUR

Complementary shades (plus highlighter) make creating contrast easy. **MAYBELLINE NEW YORK Lip Studio Color Contour Lip Palette**, \$14, drugstores



OVERLINE

Exaggerate your shape with this multiuse pencil. **SEPHORA COLLECTION Contour & Color Liner and Lipstick Duo**, \$16, sephora.com



PLUMP WITH BALM

Swipe on this HA- and peptide-infused formula to create pillowy lips. **DR. BRANDT SKINCARE Needles No More 3-D Lip Plump-Fix**, \$39, sephora.com



MAKE IT TINGLE

Thanks to natural irritants (like cinnamon oil), these applicués induce safe, temporary swelling. **VIOLENT LIPS InstaPlumper**, \$18 for 8, violentlips.com



CREATE SUCTION

Pulsating vacuum technology ups blood flow for fullness that lasts three to five hours after use. **PMD Kiss**, \$139, pmdbeauty.com