

InStyle

8 Things You Need to Know Before Getting Lip Injections



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Are you a lip filler rookie considering getting injections for the first time? You're not alone. According to statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 15.7 million cosmetic, minimally invasive procedures were performed in the U.S. last year—2.7 million of them soft-tissue fillers.

If you do decide to go under the needle for the sake of plumper lips, it's important to find a doctor you trust. Booking a consultation before the actual procedure will help you determine what filler type and look is your best option. Dr. Stephen T. Greenberg, MD, New York City-based cosmetic surgeon, recommends choosing an experienced, board-certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon knowledgeable about facial anatomy and muscle structure for the best results.

"A word-of-mouth recommendation from someone who had a good result is great," adds Dr. Joshua Zeichner, MD, Director of Cosmetic and Clinical Research in Dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. "You also can look to your local media to find a doctor with expertise. Look at the doctors' websites and social media pages for before-and-after photos."

We've turned to three top doctors for all the information you need to know before getting the procedure.

1. WHAT ARE LIP INJECTIONS, EXACTLY?

Let's start with what injections aren't: permanent. Depending on what type your doctor uses, they'll generally last from six to 18 months. The current FDA-approved fillers that doctors use are made of hyaluronic acid, a sugar found naturally in the body, which temporarily adds volume and definition.

2. WHAT TYPE OF FILLER SHOULD I GET?

Dr. Zeichner says that there are four different types of the filler used in the U.S. While they're all similar in formulation, each varies in longevity, flexibility, and how firm and plump it'll make your lips. "Depending on what your particular lip issue is, your dermatologist or plastic surgeon will choose a specific filler that is best for you," he explains. "Some are better for lip structure, while others give more volume to the body of the lip, and finally, others give a soft plumping or may improve fine lines around the mouth."

Here's a brief rundown of each:

1. Restylane: Best for overall volume and structure around the border of the lip.
2. Restylane Silk: Best for a soft finish. It's approved to be administered using a cannula (a finely-tipped needle that's associated with less bruising).
3. Juvaderm Ultra: Best for a plush finish. It's a great option for increasing the body of the lip because it pulls in a lot of hydration.
4. Volbella: Best for subtle plumping. This recently-approved formula is useful for small enhancements and fine lines around the mouth. Another advantage of this filler is that it can last longer than other types.

3. WHO CAN GET LIP INJECTIONS?

If you aren't satisfied with the current size of your lips, the good news is that almost anyone can get lip injections. Dr. Greenberg recommends avoiding lip injections if you're pregnant, breastfeeding, or have an active cold sore. "If you have any diseases of the lips, including chronic aphthous ulcers, autoimmune conditions like Behcet's, or Crohn's disease, I would recommend staying away from injections as well," adds Dr. Zeichner.

4. HOW MUCH FILLER SHOULD I GET?

The amount of filler your doctor uses drastically varies depending on the size of your natural lips and the desired finished look. Beverly Hills-based dermatologist and founder of SKINxFIVE Dr. **Ava Shamban** says that she tells patients to bring a photo of themselves when they were younger as guide so she can see the volume that used to be there. For younger patients, she uses their height and eye size to help her judgment.

5. HOW MUCH DO LIP INJECTIONS COST?

Lip injections don't come cheap. Although price will vary based on where you live and how much filler your doctor uses, Dr. Shamban says that \$500 to \$1,000 is the general price range. "If you're paying less, then you're taking a risk with an untrained provider," she says.

6. DO LIP INJECTIONS REALLY HURT?

In short: yes. Doctors typically prep lips with numbing cream to minimize pain during the procedure and ice or nerve blocks may also be used.

7. WHAT IS THE HEALING TIME?

Expect to experience some swelling and bruising in the first 24 to 48 hours following the procedure. Dr. Shamban says that these side effects can last two to five days after getting injections.

To minimize the risk of swelling and bruising, Dr. Zeichner recommends applying ice to the area right after your doctor administers the filler. If you develop serious swelling, your doctor may give you oral medication to reduce the inflammation.

8. WHAT IF I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THE FILLER?

Even though you discussed the look you wanted with your doctor, it's still possible that you won't like your lips. The filler can be dissolved with an enzyme, but Dr. Zeichner suggests waiting 48 hours before making any rash decisions. "If there is an asymmetry, a lump, or if the size or shape does not suit you, the product can be erased with an enzyme in the office," he explains. "Because there is so much movement in the lip and the skin is thin, lumps do happen. But fortunately it is an easy fix."

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