



Patient Information Leaflet
Hyaluronic Acid Lip Filler Injections

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Hyaluronic Acid Lip Filler Injections

If you are considering having a **lip filler** treatment, we recommend that you read the following information. This will help you to be fully prepared and know what questions to ask. We recommend that you check that the practitioner you choose is registered with a professional body. Although dermal fillers are classed as a medical device and do not require a prescription, we recommend that you choose a prescribing practitioner because if something does go wrong, you may need a prescription item to be able to correct this. Prior to treatment, you should have a face-to-face consultation with your treating practitioner and be offered a cooling off period before returning for treatment, so that you have time to consider your decision carefully based on the information you have been provided with.

What are hyaluronic acid lip filler injections?

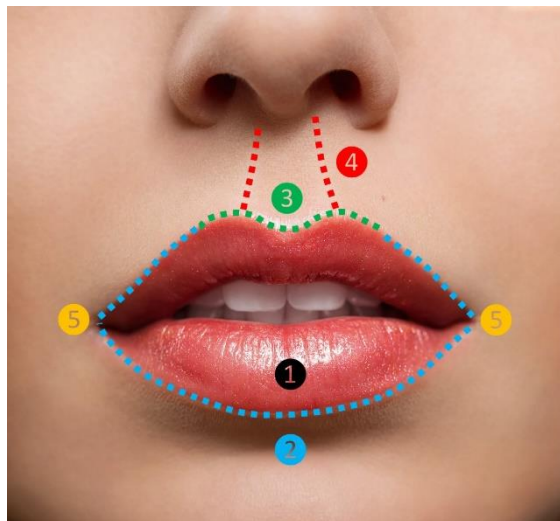
Dermal filler injections are administered using either a small needle, a cannula or both. Many practitioners favour a cannula for treating the lips as there is less risk of bruising. Dermal fillers usually come packaged in a box that contains sterile needles, product labels and a pre-loaded syringe that should be opened from its sterile packaging in front of you at the beginning of the treatment. The product label will include the name of the product, the batch number and expiry date. This will be documented on your treatment records and should be provided to you on request. The syringe will contain a clear gel like substance, which consists of a water-based carrier gel, hyaluronic acid, and may contain lidocaine, which is a local anaesthetic to make the treatment more comfortable. Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring substance, which is a major component of our skin and has a function in wound repair, hydration and cell to cell communication. One of the main characteristics of hyaluronic acid is that it effectively binds water like a sponge, which is why it is an effective tissue filler.

There are many different brands of filler available within the UK, but some have better safety profiles than others. Individual brands differ in the properties of the filler, including particle size, concentration and cross-

linking which affects their resistance to degradation (how long the filler will last), elasticity and volumising effect. Most brands produce a filler specifically designed for lip treatments.

Make sure you ask what dermal filler your practitioner will be using and why.

What areas of the lip can be treated?



Different parts of the lip can be treated depending on your requirements. Dermal fillers can be used to increase volume, enhance definition and improve shape. The areas of the lip that can be treated are the main body of the lip (the red-pink part), the vermilion border (the outer border of the red-pink part), the cupid's bow, the oral commissures, peri-oral or smoker's lines and the philtral columns. Although lips are one of the most popular areas treated with dermal fillers, you should ensure your practitioner is appropriately trained and experienced.

- 1 Main body of the lip
- 2 Vermillion border
- 3 Cupid's bow
- 4 Philtral columns
- 5 Oral commissures

Ensure your practitioner is trained and experienced in treating lips with dermal filler.

How does it work?

Hyaluronic acid dermal fillers are extremely 'hydrophilic' or water-loving. When they are injected, they boost the skin's volume, so the area becomes revitalised and volumised. Adding volume to the lips can enhance their fullness, improve hydration, correct any imbalance, provide greater definition and address the shape of the lips to a more desired appearance. During a lip treatment, your practitioner may also inject the corners of the lip (oral commissures) to help improve any down turning at the corners of the mouth and peri-oral or smoker's line above the top lip.

It is important that you discuss in detail what you would like to achieve with a filler treatment to your lips during your consultation with your practitioner, as most people want natural looking lips rather than a trout-pout. Your practitioner should also discuss risks specific to lip treatments and the product that they will use. It is usual to use 1ml or less of filler (one syringe) when treating the lips.

Is it painful?

Most dermal filler syringes contain a small amount of lidocaine, which is a local anaesthetic to help reduce any pain experienced during the procedure. Even with the addition of local anaesthetic, it is not a pain free treatment and it will depend on the injection technique, whether a cannula or needle is used and the individual's pain tolerance.

When treating the lips, it is common to use a topical anaesthetic, such as LMX4 or Emla™, to provide additional pain relief. This will be applied to the skin and left on the surface for 20-40 minutes to take effect. If using a cannula, your practitioner may inject a local anaesthetic into the area prior to introducing the cannula.

Once the anaesthetic has worn off, there may be some tenderness which is expected, but you should not experience a significant degree of pain. If you are experiencing considerable pain after the treatment, you must contact your practitioner as this could indicate that you are developing a complication.

Is it safe?

Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring substance present in the skin and the product itself is considered very safe when it is has been purchased from a reputable pharmacy or supplier. Counterfeit products have been found in general circulation which do carry a much higher risk of adverse events, so it is important to seek a practitioner who can demonstrate the source of the product.

Side-effects may be more likely due to the following factors:

- ✓ **Patient factors:** Condition of the skin, age, certain medical conditions, certain medications.
- ✓ **Practitioner factors:** Training, years of experience, number of procedures performed.
- ✓ **Premises factors:** Suitability of the premises.

There are certain risks from dermal filler lip treatments which should be discussed during your consultation.

We recommend that treatments are only performed in a suitable clinical environment.

Possible adverse effects include:

- ✓ **Pain:** Lips are more sensitive than other areas of the face and even if you have had fillers in other areas previously, you are likely to experience a degree of pain during the procedure. You may also experience some discomfort post-treatment. If you do have more pain than expected, it is essential to contact your treating practitioner immediately as this may indicate a complication, such as a vascular occlusion.
- ✓ **Redness:** This is normal and usually resolves quickly. If the treatment area becomes red a few days after treatment, particularly if heat is also present, this may indicate an infection and you need to contact your practitioner straight away.
- ✓ **Swelling:** Some swelling or oedema is normal after treatment and may be worse the following morning after the procedure. Lips are more prone to swelling than other areas of the face. However, persistent swelling should be reported to your practitioner as there may be treatment to help relieve this.
- ✓ **Bruising:** This can be anything from a small mark on the lip to extensive bruising which extends beyond the area treated and can take up to 2 weeks to resolve. Lips are very vascular and therefore have a higher risk of bruising. Rarely, bruising can lead to permanent staining of the skin.
- ✓ **Infection:** Your treatment should be conducted in an appropriate clinical environment. Your practitioner should adhere to infection control protocols and you should receive appropriate aftercare advice to lessen this risk. Infection often develops as a warm, red, swollen area over the area that has been injected a few days after your treatment. If this occurs, make sure you contact your practitioner for a review as soon as possible.
- ✓ **Herpes (Cold sores):** Treatment around the lip area can exacerbate an outbreak of herpes, which may be worse than a normal outbreak and may require treatment from your practitioner. ACE Group World recommends that preventative medication is required for certain treatments in people who are prone to cold sores. It is important that this is discussed as part of your medical history.
- ✓ **Lumps:** Lumps may be present immediately after treatment due to product misplacement or migration of the product or may appear several weeks or months later in some cases. Lumps may appear as soft swellings or as hard nodules. They sometimes occur following an acute illness, such as a dental or sinus

infection, or with exposure to excessive sunlight. If you develop a lump, it is recommended to arrange a face-to-face review with your treating practitioner.

- ✓ **Vascular Occlusion:** This is a rare but serious complication from dermal filler injections. In this situation, your blood supply has been compromised by filler that has caused a blockage or obstruction of normal blood flow. If this is not correctly managed, the skin and tissue supplied by the blood vessel does not receive sufficient oxygen and can result in tissue loss, scarring and secondary infections. A vascular occlusion will normally cause severe pain, an irregular change in colour of the area treated and poor capillary refill (a test that will be performed by your practitioner to see if the blood supply has been compromised). It will often appear immediately during treatment or soon afterwards and once this has been identified, your practitioner should have the necessary products at hand to effectively manage this. Most vascular occlusions helped by ACE Group World occur because of lip filler injections.
- ✓ **Blindness:** This is an extremely rare and devastating complication that can occur with dermal filler treatments. There are certain areas of the face that pose a higher risk if they are injected, but it has arisen following lip filler treatments. This should be discussed during your consultation with your practitioner, because if blindness occurs, it is likely to be permanent.
- ✓ **Stroke:** Another extremely rare but documented complication of dermal fillers.

If you develop any unexpected side-effects after treatment, it is important to contact your practitioner for a review as soon as possible, as they may be able to offer some corrective treatment. Although your practitioner may contact you by telephone or video call initially or you may send your own photographs, this is no substitute for a face-to-face review to provide an accurate diagnosis.

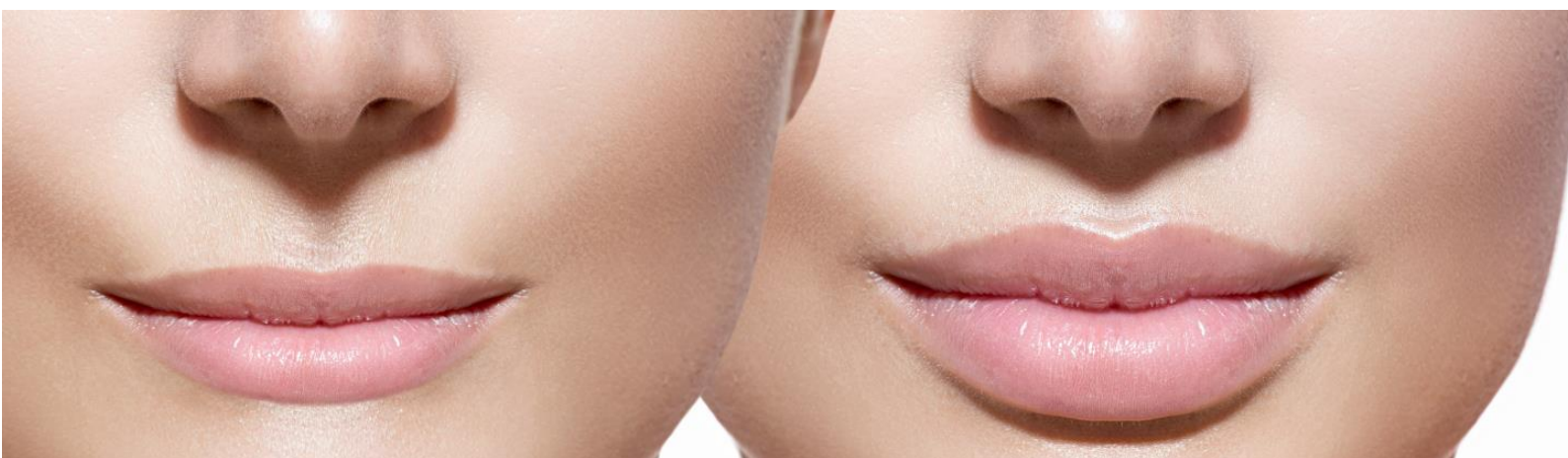
Your practitioner should provide you with an out of hour's emergency number.

What does the procedure involve?

Prior to your treatment you should be given a full consultation, complete a medical questionnaire and be allowed a cooling off period to enable you to make an informed decision with full disclosure of the possible risks and side effects specific to you. You should also be given an indication of the cost of the treatment. Before you receive any treatment, you will be required to sign a consent form, this may be on paper or electronic, and be given the opportunity to ask any further questions. Photographs should be taken and kept as part of your medical record. These should not be used for any other purpose without your explicit permission.

Do not feel pressurised or coerced into having treatment at the same time as your consultation.

The practitioner will perform an examination of the area to determine the most appropriate treatment plan. They will advise on what product and how much will be required to perform the treatment as well as whether they will be using a needle, a cannula or both. It is important to have realistic expectations about what dermal filler lip treatments can achieve.



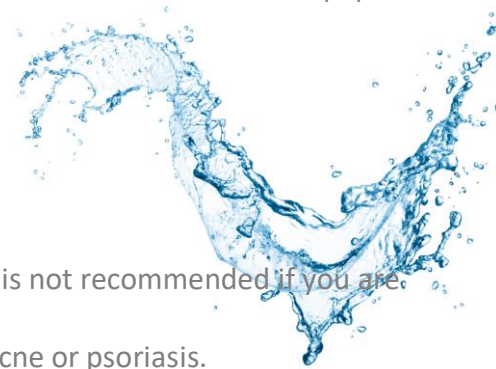
If a topical anaesthetic cream is to be used, this will be applied and removed after 20-40 minutes to allow it to take effect. The area to be treated will be cleaned, makeup removed if worn, and then disinfected. If a needle is used, you will experience several pin pricks or a scratching sensation and possibly a mild burning sensation or more significant pain as the product is injected. If a cannula is used, the practitioner may first inject a local anaesthetic to numb the insertion site, this itself can cause a burning or stinging sensation. Cannulas can create an odd pulling or tugging sensation as they are moved into place beneath the skin.

Treatment time will likely be between 15 to 30 minutes once the topical anaesthetic has been removed (if your practitioner is using this). Following your procedure, the practitioner may massage the area and then clean the skin. Some practitioners might apply a cream post-treatment. Once you and the practitioner are satisfied with the results of the treatment and you have been given sufficient recovery time, you should be given the opportunity to book a follow up appointment and receive aftercare information either in paper form or electronically.

Am I suitable for treatment?

You may not be suitable for treatment if any of the following apply:

- ✓ Dermal fillers cannot be given to pregnant or breast-feeding women and is not recommended if you are actively trying to get pregnant or undergoing IVF.
- ✓ If you suffer from keloid scarring or have active skin conditions, such as acne or psoriasis.
- ✓ If you have certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, autoimmune conditions, blood clotting disorders, cancer, immunosuppression (either medical or drug-related).
- ✓ If you are suffering from any skin infection in or near the treatment area, including cold sores.
- ✓ If you are suffering from any other infection, including dental, throat, ear, chest or sinus infections.
- ✓ If you are unwell, including coughs and colds, on the day of treatment.
- ✓ If you are taking any medicines which affect bleeding, such as aspirin or warfarin.
- ✓ If you have had Roaccutane or isotretinoin in the past 6 months.
- ✓ Certain allergies, including lidocaine or bee sting allergy.
- ✓ Recent facial surgery or other dermal fillers in the same area.
- ✓ Permanent implants in the lip.



It is important to be honest about your medical history, previous surgery, previous or planned dental treatment and any medication taken so that you can have a safe and effective treatment.

Pre-treatment advice

- ✓ Avoid taking anti-inflammatories (such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen) for 3 days prior to treatment (unless this has been prescribed by your doctor) as this increases the risk of bruising.
- ✓ Alcohol, fish oils, St. John's Wort, Gingko Biloba, garlic and Vitamin E should also be avoided for 3 days prior to treatment to lessen the risk of bruising.
- ✓ If you are prone to bruising, taking arnica orally for a few days prior to treatment may lessen the risk.
- ✓ If you are unwell on the day of your appointment, contact the practitioner to reschedule.
- ✓ Avoid sunbeds and tanning for 1 week before and after treatment.
- ✓ Ensure your practitioner is informed if there are any changes in your medical history or medication taken before receiving any treatment.
- ✓ Do not plan to have treatment within 2 weeks of an important social event or holiday as this may not allow enough time for side-effects, such as bruising to settle, or to have a review appointment.

Post-treatment advice

After treatment, most people can resume their normal daily activities. Immediately after treatment, there may be some redness, tenderness and swelling at the injection sites. Bruising may be obvious immediately after treatment and may be quite pronounced.

Although there is little evidence, many practitioners advise the following:

- ✓ Do not apply make-up for 12 hours after treatment to reduce the risk of infection.
- ✓ Avoid saunas, swimming pools and sunbeds until swelling and redness has settled.
- ✓ Try to avoid touching or rubbing the treated area until the following day, as you may affect the results of treatment or cause infection, unless otherwise advised by your practitioner.
- ✓ Avoid extremes of hot or cold and vigorous exercise until the initial swelling has resolved.
- ✓ If swelling persists, you may be advised to apply a cool pad to help remedy this.
- ✓ Avoid very hot or cold food and drinks until normal sensation has returned to the lips.
- ✓ Contact your practitioner if you experience any unwanted side-effects.

Choosing your practitioner

Ensure you know the following information:

- ✓ Practitioner's full name
- ✓ Practitioner's profession
- ✓ Practitioner's contact details (address, telephone and email)
- ✓ An emergency contact number in case a complication occurs.



Practitioners should be registered with a professional body (General Medical Council, General Dental Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, General Pharmaceutical Council or Health and Care Professions Council) and you can check their current registration status. Practitioners are accountable to these bodies and legally required to have indemnity insurance in place for all the treatments they perform.

If you are not happy with your treatment outcome, you should attempt to resolve this with your treating practitioner in the first instance. If you need to see a different practitioner, you are entitled to receive a copy of your treatment record outlining the product used and areas and volumes injected, to have your concerns addressed safely. However, remedial treatment may not be possible. Sometimes it may be necessary to allow time for the treatment to wear off.



ACE Group World was formed to help improve patient safety in medical aesthetics by producing evidence-based, peer-reviewed guidelines for the management of a wide variety of complications in non-surgical aesthetic practice. We also aim to provide help and advice for practitioners who encounter a problem.

ACE Group World hosts a forum for practitioners to share advice on the management of complications. It also provides an Emergency Helpline, email support and on-line educational modules for its members. The members also benefit from workshops, conferences, and a faculty of national and international experts.

ACE Group World works with aesthetic organisations, professional bodies, media, pharmaceutical companies, patient groups, insurers and regulatory bodies to provide professional advice and benefit for its members. Our mission is to improve regulation in the medical aesthetics sector and to provide ACE Group World Patient Information Leaflets to inform the public about what to expect and what questions to ask. We constantly strive to raise standards and improve patient safety.

Check your practitioner is a member of ACE Group World®:

uk.acegroup.online

