

How Doctors Are Using Lip Filler to Mimic the Appearance of Makeup

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Turns out the newest lip-filler techniques are able to mimic the best tools in your makeup bag: They can make lips look plumper, more defined, and even permanently glossy, all without making them look that much bigger (unless you want that, and then they can do that, too). Below, discover all the ways in which board-certified dermatologists and plastic surgeons are currently using injectables to replicate the effects of lip liner, lip gloss, highlighter, and contour.

...LIP LINER

“As we age, the line around our lips becomes less crisp,” says Melissa Doft, a plastic surgeon in New York City. “A little filler helps delineate them.” Doft uses smaller-than-small dosages (aka microdroplets) of hyaluronic acid around the lips’ border to make it look more defined, similar to the effect you get with a lip pencil. It only takes about half a cubic centimeter of product, “and your lipstick won’t bleed for the next 6 to 12 months,” she says.

...LIP GLOSS

“Kids have plump, moist lips because they produce a lot of **hyaluronic acid** naturally,” says **Jessica Wu**, a dermatologist in Los Angeles. Over time, however, that production wanes and lips get thinner and drier. Once you’re all grown up, small amounts of hyaluronic acid filler injected superficially — so they’re just below the lips’ surface — help bind water to the mucous membranes and restore that youthful plumpness and smoothness, says Wu. The result isn’t Lipglass, but you will notice a healthy sheen.

...HIGHLIGHTER

The Cupid’s bow tends to flatten with age, but the right filler, in the right spots, can restore its shape. “I put a small amount of a more viscous hyaluronic acid filler, like **Restylane L**, at the peaks of the Cupid’s bow and up along the philtral columns, which are those two ‘legs’ that go from the lips up toward the nostrils,” says Wu. (Just think about where you might apply highlighter.) **Defining the Cupid’s bow** can also make filled lips look more natural. “If you only fill the lips without enhancing the Cupid’s bow, you could end up with an upper lip that goes unnaturally straight across and sticks out, like a duck,” says Wu.

...CONTOUR

“To make lips look pillowy, you want more filler in the center of the lips than on the sides,” says **Doris Day**, a dermatologist in New York City. It creates the same kind of effect as dabbing lip gloss onto the bottom of the lower lip — only, you know, using needles. “I often put a little filler in the chin as well to bring the lower lip forward without having to overfill the lips,” says Day.