

Thinking About Getting Lip Filler For the First Time? Here's What You Need To Know



The first time I decided I was going to get lip filler was after a friend of mine sent a photo of Kendall Jenner to a group chat on Instagram. It didn't take long for a flurry of messages to come in commenting on her lips. To me, they were plush and perfect; to my friends, they were "too much." "Can't people just be happy with how they look and be natural?" one friend asked. I suddenly felt defensive over a celebrity I never met — one who, for the record, has never confirmed nor denied getting lip filler before. To be fair, I've contemplated what my lips might look like with the help of injectables for years, but it wasn't until I found myself arguing for the supermodel and her decisions did I realize, *maybe it's finally time to try them.*

A week later, I booked my appointment with Melissa Doft, M.D., a plastic surgeon in New York City. Although I, and Dr. Doft, suggest doing research before choosing the physician for your injectables, mine was a

unique case. Dr. Doft is the woman responsible for my breast reduction surgery in 2018. As far as bedside manner goes, Dr. Doft has the best, so trusting her with my lips was a no-brainer. Now, it's officially been a month since first getting my lip filler and, well, I'm *definitely* on the bandwagon.

I'm not recommending anyone get the cosmetic treatment because, frankly, you don't *need* them, but boy did I *want* them — and it was totally worth it. Just in case you are curious, Dr. Doft answered every question you need to know before getting lip injections, ahead. Then keep clicking for my personal take on the process (spoiler: I have a hot tip to reduce bruising).

What Are Lip Fillers?

"Most doctors in the US use hyaluronic acid dermal fillers to help plump or define the lips," said Dr. Doft. "Hyaluronic acid is a sugar that is able to absorb 1,000 times its weight in water leading to a hydrating and plumping effect."

If the ingredient sounds familiar, it should; it's a naturally occurring molecule in your skin, which also makes it well-tolerable so you don't have to worry about allergic reactions. Hyaluronic acid, in a few different forms, is the standard for lip injections with several brands being FDA-approved, like Restylane Silk and Juvéderm. As far as knowing which brand is right for you, your doctor will use their discretion to choose.

"I favor smaller particle hyaluronic acid fillers, like Juvaderm, Vobella, Restalyne Refyne, or Belatero," Dr. Doft explained. "The smaller particle size allows me to inject closer to the surface of the lip to create definition." She adds that smaller particles are less likely to create bumps in the patient's lips (more on that later).

How Should I Prepare For My Lip Filler Appointment?

Luckily, there's not a whole lot you have to do to prepare for the actual appointment. However, Dr. Doft had one suggestion: "I ask patients to avoid medicines that can increase bruising for one week [before their appointment]." (Think: aspirin, Motrin, Advil, and Ibuprofen.) If you take fish oil supplements or vitamins, consider avoiding those for a week, too, to avoid bruising.

Are Lip Injections Painful?

Pain is subjective and usually dependent on your personal tolerance, but most people will say getting lip injections is an uncomfortable process. After all, it is a needle going into your lips. In some cases, most people find the process more painful after the fact during the week-long recovery due to soreness and swelling. With 1 million nerves in your lip, the potential to feel some discomfort is real; however Dr. Doft said she applies a very strong topical numbing cream onto the lips beforehand to reduce the pain.

How Long Do Lip Fillers Last?

Lip fillers can last from six to 12 months. Dr. Doft noted that most of her patients return every six months, but that she tends to inject less volume at the second appointment (and so on) for a more natural appearance.

Can Lip Filler Be Removed?

Yes, you can remove lip filler. (Kylie Jenner has done it before.) Dr. Doft said that it's a matter of dissolving the hyaluronic acid, which for the record, is temporary to begin with, with an enzyme called hyaluronidase. This also has to be injected into your lips in order for the filler to be "removed." The lips are well innervated, so getting lip filler removed isn't necessarily a fun experience. Some people with high thresholds for pain consider it incredibly uncomfortable, but again, this is all subjective.

What Should I Expect the Day After Getting Lip Injections?

"The down time is related to swelling and bruising," Dr. Doft said. "Most patients find they experience swelling during the first three to seven days." Bruising can occur, too, but usually resolves within a week. While Dr. Doft assured me that most patients don't need an anti-inflammatory post-injections, she does recommend eating pineapple or taking Arnica montana – both can reduce bruising. Additionally, lips will feel a little tender and hard after the injections, but as the hyaluronic acid absorbs water the lips will soften and feel normal again.

How To Find the Right Doctor

Research and consultations are key. "Look at the physician and make sure that they have a similar aesthetic to yours," Dr. Doft suggested, adding that many physicians have before and after photos or reviews online that you can check out. While Instagram is a new way to find a doctor for you, it's still important to book an in-person consultation before committing to your decision. Another helpful tip is asking a friend. If you know someone who has lip injections you admire, consider asking them for a recommendation. Just be sure that whoever you do choose is a medical professional and not an unlicensed person at a medspa you found on Groupon.

How Much Does Lip Filler Cost?

According to Dr. Doft, the cost depends on the amount of filler injected and, often, who is injecting them. "Doctors will often charge more than nurses or physician assistants, but the type of filler can also affect cost," she said. "Most physicians up charge for only the brand Voluma, which is used for the cheeks and not the lips." The price is also regionally dependent, so in New York lip injections can cost anywhere between \$500

to \$1,000. Go anywhere else in the country and it'll be about the same price, likely never exceeding \$2,000.

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