

How long do fillers last? Will it hurt? Will I be swollen?

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If you’ve never had filler treatments before you probably have many questions. What can you do with fillers and why have that particular treatment instead of other types of aesthetic procedures? Is it painful and what is the risk of side effects? How long do fillers last and how can I make sure that fillers give me the result I want? In this article we will try to answer your questions.

Fillers – what’s in them?

Different types of fillers have been used throughout the years, but today almost all fillers are made of hyaluronic acid, a natural substance found in our body. Hyaluronic acid binds large amounts of water and keeps our body tissues – for example joints, muscles and skin – lubricated and smooth.

Natural hyaluronic acid in our bodies forms and degrades within a day or two. The hyaluronic acid used in fillers has been stabilized, by cross-linking the long hyaluronic acid molecules. This means that it will last much longer before the body breaks it down.

Nowadays the hyaluronic acid used in fillers for aesthetic use is non-animal and is derived from bacterial fermentation.

Why have filler treatments instead of other types of aesthetic procedures?

Different aesthetic procedures target different needs. Hyaluronic acid-based fillers are generally used to:

- Fill – for example to fill lines and wrinkles. When filling wrinkles in areas of the face that move a lot, such as marionette lines and nasolabial folds, flexible fillers are usually preferred. That means that facial expressions like smiling will look natural.
- Lift and build structure – for example to change the profile of the nose, change the shape of the chin, or to lift the cheeks. In these cases, firmer fillers are usually preferred.
- Volumize – for instance adding volume to the lips or cheeks. In these cases, a softer and flexible filler is usually preferred for a natural-looking result.

How do I choose the right type of filler?

If the above sounds complicated, don't worry. As a patient, you don't have to be an expert on different filler gel properties. A qualified healthcare practitioner knows what type of filler is best to get the desired result.

Qualified healthcare practitioners are also experts on facial anatomy. For example, a person who has thinner tissue coverage in the cheeks can get a better-looking result with softer fillers. A person with thicker tissue coverage can use firmer fillers that can provide a lift. Brands such as RESTYLANE® have put a lot of effort into developing different kinds of filler gels for personalized treatments, so there's a lot to choose from.

Remember that you should always turn to a qualified healthcare practitioner!

How long do fillers last?

How long do fillers last is probably one of the most frequently asked questions. It makes sense, seeing as it impacts the cost of treatment - and for most people there's a limit as to how much they can spend on filler treatments!

Unfortunately, there is no straight answer to the question how long do fillers last. The hyaluronic acid in fillers will normally be broken down a bit quicker by the body in areas that you move a lot, such as the lips. Some fillers can

be quite long-lasting despite that. Restylane® KYSSE™, that is used in the lips, has been shown to last up to at least one year.[1] Restylane® VOLYME™, which is used to provide soft volume to the cheeks, has been shown to last up to at least 18 months.[2]

In areas that are not so dynamic, such as the nose or chin, the filler will usually last longer.

Ask your (qualified) healthcare practitioner how long you can expect the filler/fillers used in your specific case to last.

How long do fillers last also depends on what looks you're after

Fillers don't disappear from one day to the next. They are gradually broken down by the body. After some months, a bit of the volume will have receded.

If you don't mind when some of the volume recedes, you may prefer to have filler treatments less often. If on the other hand, you're striving for a particular look and really want to keep that look consistent, you'll have to do touch up treatments a little bit more often.

Are filler treatments painful?

Most fillers today contain a local anesthetic, lidocaine, that takes away most of the pain and makes the treatment more comfortable for you. Your healthcare practitioner can also apply extra anesthetic cream on your skin.

Many people are afraid of needles, but the actual time it takes to inject a filler is usually very short, seconds or minutes. Generally, a lot more time is spent on the consultation before the treatment. During the consultation your healthcare practitioner will make a facial assessment and discuss all your wishes and needs with you. This is a great opportunity for you to ask all questions you may have and explain what results you want.

Make sure to prepare for the consultation by thinking through your questions and exactly what result you want. This will help the healthcare practitioner to tailor the treatment to you!

Are there any side effects from fillers?

You should always discuss side effects with your healthcare practitioner before your treatment. He or she will know whether a filler treatment will work well in your specific case and give advice on what you should do should you experience any side effects.

What if I look strange afterwards? How can I avoid that?

Remember that clinics want happy customers who come back. If you want a specific result, tell your healthcare practitioner! Bring images if that helps you to explain what you want.

Your healthcare practitioner will listen to you, complete a facial assessment and then tailor the treatment so that you can get your desired result. If you want a natural-looking result so that no one guesses that you've had filler treatments – tell them. Remember that the persons you may see who look fake to you most probably asked for that specific look. So, you just have to tell your healthcare practitioner what look you're after.

Another great thing with hyaluronic acid fillers is that they aren't permanent. If you have new ideas about your look, or want to fine-tune it, it will be possible to change and adapt in following filler treatments.

Learn more: How to find a clinic that you can trust

References

1. Restylane® KYSSE™ lasts up to at least one year: Hilton S et al. Dermatol Surg 2018;44:261–269.
2. Restylane® VOLYME™ lasts up to at least 18 months: Talarico S et al. Dermatol Surg 2015;41:1361–1369.

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