

# Filler Injections

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## Treatment Overview

Filler injections are a cosmetic treatment used to smooth [wrinkles](#) or pitted scars in the [skin](#), usually on the face. They are also used to make the lips fuller. When injected under the skin, a filler raises or puffs up that area. This usually goes away over time. There are many kinds of injectable fillers, including:

- [Hyaluronic acid](#) (Restylane, Juvederm, Captique). The hyaluronic acid draws fluid to the treated area.
- Bovine [collagen](#) (Zyplast, Zyderm). You need an [allergy test](#) 4 weeks before treatment.
- Fat cells harvested from your body (autologous fat).
- Man-made biodegradable polymer (Sculptra).
- [Calcium](#) hydroxylapatite (Radiesse).
- Microscopic plastic beads and bovine [collagen](#) (Artefill). The plastic beads are made of poly(methyl methacrylate) (PMMA). The collagen goes away over time, but the plastic beads remain under the skin permanently.

Some doctors use fillers that are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Check with your doctor when deciding which treatment is right for you.

For some fillers, your skin is first numbed with a [local anesthetic](#). Then a cosmetic surgeon or dermatologist uses a needle to inject the filler under the skin. A treatment session takes about 15 minutes. Some fillers are done in repeat sessions a couple of weeks apart.

## What To Expect After Treatment

After a filler injection, expect some pain, redness, swelling, and possibly [itching](#). Swelling may last up to 36 hours.

If symptoms start to get worse 1 to 3 days after the treatment, call your doctor—you may be getting an infection.

## Why It Is Done

Filler injections are used to smooth scarred, wrinkled, or furrowed skin on the face. Some fillers are also used to add fullness to the lips.

## How Well It Works

Depending on the area being treated, the filler, and your body's reaction to the filler, you might have one or more repeat injections.

Different fillers last different lengths of time. Slowly, your body absorbs the filler. This makes the skin go back to its normal state.

- Hyaluronic acid (Restylane, Juvederm, Captique). The effect lasts about 9 to 12 months.
- Fat cells harvested from your body (autologous fat). The effect can last for months to years.
- Man-made biodegradable polymer (Sculptra). The effect can last up to 2 years.
- [Calcium](#) hydroxylapatite (Radiesse). The effect lasts about 12 months.
- Microscopic plastic beads and bovine collagen (Artefill). The effect has been shown to last for at least 5 years.<sup>1</sup>