

# Injectables:

## Making Changes Without Going Under the Knife

**C**osmetic surgical procedures can produce profound, long-lasting changes in facial appearance, but are also invasive and have an associated recovery period. Many people who are just beginning to show signs of facial aging desire improvement, but cannot justify the cost or time investment required for surgical intervention. For people in this situation, the rapidly expanding repertoire of injectable treatments is a great option to meet their needs. Injectables are an in-office procedure and some treatments do not even require an anesthetic. With other injectables, topical anesthetic agents or nerve blocks might be used depending on the patient's preference and the sensitivity of the region being treated.

### **Neuromuscular agents**

Botulinum Toxin type A is a family of neurotoxins that block nerve signals that cause muscles to contract. This option is most appropriate for active lines or age associated wrinkles that are just starting to appear. The toxin works directly where it is placed to temporarily weaken or paralyze the muscle causing the wrinkle. Thus, it can be artistically used to alter facial expression and typically lasts 3 to 4 months. Botox Cosmetic® is widely recognized and was the first neurotoxin to be approved for cosmetic use in the United States. Risks

include bruising at the injection site, rare chance of an infection and the possibility of unintentionally affecting nearby muscle groups. Specific risks should be discussed with your surgeon when considering treatment.

### **Soft tissue fillers**

This group of injectable treatments is rapidly expanding and many options are available. These are more useful for treatment of firmly established wrinkles or larger lines of facial aging, such as the nasolabial folds. Depending on the type of filler and the depth at which it is injected, you can smooth out fine lines on the surface of the skin, fill out deep lines, augment soft tissues (such as the lips) or even effectively augment facial bone structure. Each of these fillers is placed by an injection, so the group carries usual risks of bruising, lumpiness, redness, product specific adverse reactions and in rare cases local infections.

The most common fillers are based on hyaluronic acid (HA), which is a sugar found naturally in human skin. A major benefit of this filler class is that allergic reactions are extremely rare and no pre-treatment skin testing is necessary. These compounds bind water similar to the way a sponge absorbs water. Because of this, they hydrate the skin in the treated region and act as a cushion. Several manufacturers are coming out with versions of HA

fillers that have different formulations. This range of formulations expands the repertoire of options available to your surgeon, as certain products are better suited for different anatomical regions. Some tend to be softer and smoother and work well in regions such as the lips, while others have more structure and are best suited for deep folds or creases. Results last from 3 months in high mobility areas such as the lips, to 1 year in regions such as the nasolabial folds, with most patients experiencing the desired effects for 6 months.

Although there are many options available, there is no "one best product" for any particular use. Our recommendation is to consult with a board certified plastic surgeon to discuss your areas of concern and to hear the options they suggest. Your surgeon will have their personal preference regarding a filler or neuromuscular agent that gives good results in their hands, and together you should be able to choose a treatment regime that matches your desires.

*For more information, contact Dr. Chad Tattini or Dr. Laura Randolph at Twin City Plastic Surgery 309-667-1007 or 309-664-6222 [www.twincityplasticsurgery.com](http://www.twincityplasticsurgery.com). Their office is located at 2502 E. Empire in Bloomington.*

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