

Are Collagen Injections Right For You?

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According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, approximately 8,700 lip augmentation procedures were performed nationwide in 2007. While some of these procedures involved artificial lip implants like those used in breast implants, the vast majority were done via collagen injections. Not only can these injections make that invisible upper lip plump and healthy looking, but it can also get rid of deep wrinkles, crow's feet, laugh lines, acne scars and eye wrinkles. FDA-approved since 1981, collagen injections are safe, quick and easy to administer. Collagen is essentially just a naturally-occurring protein in the body that breaks down over time, so there are generally few complications involved. Patients typically come in, undergo a 30 to 60 minute procedure and leave the same day. Within a few days, once the swelling goes down, patients will notice the improvement in their appearance.

There are two main types of collagen fillers: bovine-based and human-based. The collagen undergoes a purification process and is mixed with salt water and the anesthesia lidocaine to provide comfort during the process. While it may seem strange to have bovine-based collagen in our bodies, it actually works very well with human tissue and actually has fewer instances of allergic reactions.

One criticism of these injections is that the effects aren't always permanent and touch-up injections may be required 2 to 4 times a year to maintain the smooth visage. Just as your body's natural collagen support structure loses form over time, so will your supplementary protein. However, these injections can stimulate the body's natural production for some patients, meaning there will be less routine maintenance needed. While the risk factor is low, approximately 3% of the patients will be allergic to the shots, which means that additional steroid infusions may be needed to reduce itching, redness and swelling.

Whether you're 35 or 65, collagen injections can be a low cost, highly satisfying way to reduce lines and wrinkles, enhance certain features or cover embarrassing scars, burns and blemishes. After a surgeon consultation and testing period, you'll be able to enjoy the ultimate makeover, without being cut open. Once your looks are restored, you'll find less energy spent worrying about aging and you'll be able to confidently enjoy your family, your hobbies, your career or whatever you please.