

REFRESHING YOUR FACE WITHOUT A TRACE

By Kouros Azar, M.D.



Since the beginning of civilization, people have searched for easy and quick methods to keep themselves in the light of youth and to break the spell of aging. Our modern day quest has led to a boom in the number of people getting injectable non-surgical treatments.

HYALURONIC ACID FILLERS (HA)

The most popular category of injectable treatments today is the hyaluronic acid fillers (HA). These fillers are used to treat wrinkles, shadows and smile lines around the mouth, to lift the cheeks, to reduce dark circles around the eyes and much more. HA is a naturally-occurring sugar that lives within the walls of all of our own body's cells. The current HA products are synthesized by bacteria and purified so they are not derived from animal or human products. They represent one of the safest and easiest cosmetic treatments ever developed. According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), the number of people getting HA injections is up by 31.5% in 2013 to over 1.8 Million people annually. These products are also immensely popular around the world and especially in Europe where a larger variety of HA products are available to the public.

JUVEDERM VOLUMA

Recently in the US, a major breakthrough in HA technology was approved. **Juvederm Voluma** (TM Allergan) - approved in October 2013 - represents a big jump in technology for Americans looking to refresh their face. Voluma is the first HA filler to be approved specifically for lifting the cheeks and mimicking the results of a facelift without surgery. The advance in the product is that it is more powerful at lifting the tissues while still looking very natural and undetectable. The duration of the result has also been shown to last up to 2 years which is a big increase in duration over previous generation products. The treatment is quick and relatively painless and is also completely reversible. If for some reason you don't like the result, it can be easily dissolved with another safe injection of an enzyme which turns it into water and eliminates it from the body. As an experienced Allergan trainer and user of Voluma in my practice, I have been extremely impressed with how rejuvenating it is for my patients without overdoing things. The overall trend in fillers today is to choose a more subtle and undetectable change in the face. Many celebrity patients are taking advantage of this simple and relatively safe path for facial rejuvenation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

Like all medical treatments, it is best to choose a highly-qualified provider as HA fillers can have some risks in the wrong hands. In a general sense, the most qualified practitioners to perform these injections belong to the following category of specialties: Board Certified Plastic Surgeons, Board Certified Dermatologists, Board Certified Facial Plastic Surgeons (Otolaryngology), and some Ophthalmologists with training in Oculoplastic Surgery. When we look around in a public place we often don't recognize which people have had these treatments especially if the work was done in a subtle and proper way. On rare occasion, there can be an inherent bias in noticing one person who may have had a little too much or a less-than-ideal result. This can be for various reasons. Patients may choose to go to multiple providers without informing the doctor or may choose less-experienced injectors. These types of experiences may unnecessarily increase public fears of these treatments but rest assured that the overwhelming majority of people getting injections every day in the hands of experienced providers are extremely happy and will go about their day with a renewed and refreshed face - without a trace.



Kouros Azar, M.D. Board Certified Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon (American Society of Plastic Surgeons) Member of American Society of Plastic Surgeons