

Injectables: what's the point?

Unless you've been living on a desert island for the past 15 years, it's fair to say most people have heard of muscle relaxant injections and dermal fillers. But, although they have now been used to successfully treat the signs of ageing, skin laxity, loss or lack of volume, lip lines, and even medical conditions such as hyperhidrosis (excess sweating) for nearly two decades, many people still don't 'trust' these treatments. This is understandable based on some of the horror stories of 'botched' treatments that have appeared in the media alongside terrifying photos of 'trout pouts' or celebrities unable to smile, frown or show any facial expressions whatsoever. Add to this the scaremongering about 'toxins', bandy about treatment names such as the 'Vampire' facial and micro-needling, and it's no wonder that many people are still running scared from these types of aesthetic treatments. This is a shame as (in the right hands) injectables and other treatments that involve needles produce wonderful, natural-looking results on a range of skin problems... and many people are missing out through fear, misinformation or due to bad outcomes caused by inexperienced practitioners.

So, let's get to the point with the facts:

There are two main types of injectable treatments – muscle relaxants and dermal fillers. Although both are administered similarly – i.e. using very fine needles, the aesthetician or aesthetic doctor injects a muscle relaxant or filler into the problem area – both work differently and are used for different problems and conditions.

Muscle relaxants can treat: wrinkles, lines and the signs of ageing. This includes crow's feet; bunny lines on the side of the nose; frown lines on the forehead, brow and between the eyes; and the neck (known as the Nefertiti neck lift). One other important use is for hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating). This can be a distressing condition, but can be effectively treated with muscle relaxants in clinic.

How do they work? They stop the muscle from contracting and as a result smooth and rejuvenate the appearance of the line or wrinkle. Muscle relaxants are mainly used on the upper face.

Dermal fillers can treat: Loss of volume and definition (e.g. thinning lips and loss of definition and Cupid's Bow due to ageing or weight loss); a natural lack of volume; and/or an uneven appearance and proportion (e.g. the upper or lower lip is noticeably thinner, or unbalanced on one side) particularly in the cheek, chin, and lip areas where enhancement with fillers can produce outstanding results. Dermal fillers are mainly used in the lower face.

How do they work? They plump the skin to add volume and definition.

Are injectables safe?

Yes... in the right hands they are a simple procedure. For muscle relaxants and dermal fillers, we work alongside Dr Gabi, a trained and highly experienced professional and injectables trainer. Furthermore, there are injectables aestheticians who are trained to Level 7 – the same level as medical practitioners such as nurses and doctors who have trained in aesthetics. Sadly, the reason for the scare stories is due to a lack of regulation in this field. But, you can easily protect yourself. Simply check the qualifications of the person actually carrying out your treatment. A doctor may well be the figurehead of the clinic you visit, but what about the person actually treating you? Don't be frightened to ask how long the aesthetician has been carrying out injectables; always have a consultation; and never feel pressured into having a treatment there and then.

Will I look fake?

Once again, it all depends on the quality of the practitioner. But, with a reputable expert the answer is definitely 'no'. Forget 'trout pout' and frozen, expressionless faces; instead the only person who should know you've had injectables should be you! Dr Gabi has an ethos that we share strongly at Serenity Clinic: you'll look great, but only you will know why.

So, in answer to the question... what is the point? The answer is: the results. Real, tangible improvements in the way you look.

No needles?

If you have a genuine phobia of needles or are not quite ready to take the plunge, there is a wide range of advanced aesthetic treatments that don't involve needles. These include, but are not limited to: Venus, Mediwave, LED light therapy, cryo, magnetic radio frequency, ultrasound, and Baxendale Wave. Advanced cosmeceutical skincare – which works on cell and cellular turnover – can make a visible difference in two weeks just by changing to the correct advanced skincare, such as Image. We use these as both stand-alone treatments and as part of our combination therapy programmes to obtain the optimum outcome for each client.

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