



Beth Comeau, MD
Fillers & Injectables for a Youthful Appearance

Beautiful Lips

Over the last decade, fuller pouty lips have become the desire of many women to appear sexy and more youthful. The typical person has an upper lip that is two-thirds the size of the lower lip. In order to achieve this pouty appearance, the upper lip can more closely match the size of the lower lip. Some individuals desire a larger upper lip compared to that of the lower lip.

Lip augmentation has become a very popular procedure that can truly enhance a patient's appearance. Many individuals are born with smaller, thin lips and desire a fuller look. Also, as we age, our lips naturally become smaller because of the constant contraction of the very strong muscle surrounding our lips and the concurrent loss of collagen, elastin, and lip volume that tends to make our lips turn in. We lose the vermilion show (the pink part of the lip) and this results in the appearance of smaller, thinner lips as we age. Also, as the result of sun exposure and smoking in some individuals, we tend to develop vertical lip lines that remind us of our aging face and missing our once fuller lips.

With the advances in non-surgical aesthetic procedures, patients can achieve the desired lip appearance easily and without significant complications. Previously, patients needed surgery or more permanent products placed in the lip and with permanent procedures sometimes come permanent problems. Now, it is very simple to have a lip augmentation with the use of hyaluronic acid derivatives like Juvederm and Restylane. Small injections of this material are carefully administered into the lip tissue to enhance the person's natural lip curvature. Often, by just adding a bit of filler to the vermilion border, the line between the pink and natural skin tone of the lip, you can significantly reduce vertical lip lines, enhance the volume of the lip and achieve a more youthful appearance. It is important that you communicate the desired lip fullness to the aesthetic practitioner so you don't end up with disproportionate lips that leave you feeling uncomfortable. Keep in mind there is a bit of swelling following the injection and this will diminish by the third day following the procedure.

For comfort, I always recommend at least a topical numbing cream to be applied for about 30-45 minutes prior to the procedure. Some patients will choose to have a dental block to anesthetize the nerves that innervate the lips so the procedure is virtually pain free; however, the dental block is not without some discomfort. Overall, the lip augmentation is a fairly simple procedure that can make an amazing difference in the patient's appearance and how they feel about themselves. This procedure costs anywhere from \$500 to \$800 and will need to be repeated every 4 to 6 months to maintain a beautiful, more youthful, fuller lip.

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