

Botox and Injectable Fillers

from Dr. James B.Lowe, MD, FACS

Botox® is a drug that blocks nerve transmission and relaxes the underlying muscles. It is excellent in the treatment of wrinkles caused by muscle movement (forehead, crow's feet, and mouth). Injectable fillers are substances that are naturally occurring or synthetic that can be added to depressions in the face. The fill materials most commonly used are: Collagen, Restylane®, Hylaform®, Radiesse® (Radianse™), or Fat (harvested from the patient).

Botox®

Botox® is a natural, purified protein, which in very low doses relaxes the overactive muscles that cause frown lines to form. Treatment is simple and non-surgical and smoothes the deep, persistent lines between your brows that can develop over time. The effects of Botox® last for approximately 3-6 months. To learn more about this product visit www.botoxcosmetic.com.

Restylane®

Restylane® is a natural cosmetic dermal gel filler that restores fullness to the skin to correct moderate to severe facial wrinkles and folds, such as nasolabial folds. It has shown to restore fullness and provides a smoother contour to the face for 6 months or longer. Restylane® is injected directly into the skin in tiny amounts by an ultra fine needle, resulting in minimal discomfort for patients.

Hylaform®

Hylaform® is a gel that adds volume to your skin by mimicking the hydrating effects of your skin's natural hyaluronic acid. It can be used to plump up fine lines in the face such as the lips, crow's feet or Marionette lines. Hylaform® is also injected directly into the skin with an ultra fine needle. To learn more about this product visit www.inamed.com.

Radiesse®

Radiesse® or Radianse™ is a soft tissue filler composed of material found in human bone. It is not currently FDA approved for cosmetic use in humans. Radiesse® is FDA approved for other applications and is considered safe in those applications. It is good at treating deep wrinkles and other deep contour irregularities. Its risks include palpability and unintended boney in-growth and it requires greater technical skills during injections. Radiesse® cost twice as much as other fillers but its effects may last up to 3 years.

Fat Grafting (Your own Fat)

Fat grafting has been used for over a decade with success. Fat cells are harvested from the patient (usually from the abdomen or thighs) using a small cannula and a syringe. The fat is removed, centrifuged, and "packed" to remove impurities and injected into the desired sites through a small needle. There is a 40-50% rate of cell survival – this means that of all the cells injected and three months following surgery that 40-50% of what was placed originally will be there forever. Fat grafting requires technical expertise, the operating room for equipment, and multiple applications. It is an excellent option when going to the OR for other procedures and your own fat is free and long-lasting.

Collagen

Although the use of animal derived collagen is old, the use of human collagen as an implant material is relatively new. The premise is, that tissue taken from a patient and reformulated as collagen can then be returned to the patient in injectable form to fill wrinkles and depressions primarily in the face. Unfortunately, collagen is resorbed by the body over time and last for only 3-4 months. Other above products seem to have replaced this technology for now.

Alloderm®

Is derived from cadaver skin and has been used as an injectable and a soft tissue filler. The material is costly and its effects last anywhere from 1-3 years. Other injectables have slowly replaced this application with less cost and less complications. Alloderm is no longer widely used as a filler

Summary

Technology continues to provide new and improved cosmetic products that enhance results and last longer. Time has shown that some of these products do not work as well as we once thought and others work better than we imagined. It is best to have a frank discussion with Dr. Lowe regarding your aesthetic concerns and let him make recommendations that fit your clinical problem and your budget. It is important to discuss the risks and period of benefit with Dr. Lowe so that you can make an informed decision regarding your care.