

The Side Effects of Lip Injections

Lip augmentation is one of the most sought-after plastic surgery procedures that help women achieve a plumper and fuller lip look. While dermal filler injections (using hyaluronic acid) are a common approach to lip enhancement, Botox injections (also called Botox Lip Flip) have emerged as another minimally invasive treatment option.

But what side effects can you get from lip injections? The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) considers Botox to be safe and carry less risk with temporary side effects such as headache, nausea, bruising, and temporary facial weakness that disappear over time.

Common Botox Lip Injections Side Effects

Botox is a non-invasive form of cosmetic procedure with no reported major side effects as long as it's performed under the supervision of a licensed cosmetic professional. Rest assured that most clinics and dermatologists follow safety protocols established by the FDA.

In most cases, the procedure is done in about 20 minutes, and patients may continue their usual activities right after the treatment. But as with all injections, mild discomfort and pain may occur due to contact of the needle with the facial skin. Other minor side effects and complications from injections include:

1. Bruising and swelling at the injection site

Facial swelling is a natural reaction of the body after almost any surgery, especially for Botox cosmetic and facial filler procedures. It happens mostly due to an injury in the tissue when the botulinum toxin is injected, and it may take time for the body to form new cells in the swollen lip area.

Some blood vessels in the lips may also be punctured which can cause redness and bruising. But the good thing is that the body has natural healing properties, and the vessels are easily repaired so it's not a cause for major concern. Here's a timeline to give a clear overview of how long this can last:

Day 1 - After a procedure, the lips may feel hard and tender. This is a common reaction to the surgical procedure and can be remedied by applying an ice pack to the injection site of the lip filler.

Day 2 - The pain at the Botox injection site starts to subside and the patient may already see what their filled lips look like.

Day 5 - This is when side effects have mostly disappeared, and the desired results of the injection are starting to show.

Day 7 to 14 - By this time, the lips have fully restored their volume and shape as a successful effect of the lip filler treatment. If there are still bruising or lumps, it can be easily covered up with a good foundation. You can also directly massage the lips.

2. Numbness at the lips

Numbness is a sign of neuropathy where nerves cannot transmit signals between the lips and the brain. During the procedure, the Botox causes the muscles at the injection area to be paralyzed. It effectively blocks synapses in the nerves and causes the lips to lose feeling for a short while.

In the case of lip augmentation, the botulinum toxin temporarily relaxes the muscles so the upper lip can flip upward and outward to achieve a fuller and augmented appearance. The numbing sensation often disappears on its own, but when prolonged, it can be remedied by taking an antihistamine or massaging the lips with a numbing cream.

3. Headache

A small percentage of dermal filler patients may also experience mild and temporary headaches. This is mostly due to the lip filler injection that can cause over-contraction of certain facial muscles. Regular over-the-counter medications and pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) help reduce Botox-induced headaches.

4. Nausea

The paralyzing effect of the botulinum toxin can hinder the patient's ability to pucker, whistle, chew, and drink through straws. Especially for individuals who were administered with anesthesia during the dermal filler procedure, nausea can be a usual aftereffect as they wait for the numbing agent to wear off before eating. Antiemetics (such as Emetrol, Nauzene, and Pepto-Bismol) can be taken to calm and soothe the nauseating feeling after a procedure.

Learn more: [8 Things Not to Do After Lip Injections](#)

What to Do If You Experience Serious Side Effects

While most Botox treatments have the seal of approval from the FDA, it's still important to remember that it's a toxin, and improper administration may cause the chemical to spread to other muscles and show rare but serious side effects. This occurs in no more than 1 percent of patients who have repeated Botox treatments.

It's only when the toxin disperses beyond the muscle where it's applied can it cause severe reactions. That's why it's advised to avoid rubbing or massaging the lip area after injection to prevent Botox from spreading. Patients should seek immediate medical help when experiencing the following:

Muscle weakness

Slurred speech

Shortness of breath

Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)

Blurred eyesight or vision problems

Loss of bladder control

Severe allergic reaction

Botox is a powerful toxin and is not recommended for breastfeeding mothers, pregnant patients, or those who are planning to become pregnant. While there are no case studies available yet, most surgeons advise pregnant patients to err on the side of caution and avoid the lip flip procedure as much as possible.

Treatment With Hyaluronidase

When post-procedure symptoms become drastic or in the event that the injection was made at the wrong area, some doctors may recommend reversing the injectable filler with hyaluronidase. This is also a chosen countermeasure by patients who are unsatisfied with the results of their cosmetic facial fillers and lip fillers.

However, this only works for dermal fillers done with hyaluronic acid (a component in most skincare products that hydrates the upper lip for a fresher and plumper look). Unlike Botox treatments, hyaluronic acid filler (HA filler) can easily be removed with hyaluronidase. It's a known enzyme present in the body and has the ability to break down and reabsorb the product, dissolving it completely within 24 to 48 hours.

It's also seen as an ideal additive for local anesthetics because it allows an injected solution to penetrate tissue faster and speed up its results.

So far, there are no studies showing that Botox is reversible. Unlike fillers, Botox is applied directly to the area in the upper lip and paralyzes the muscles so that they can flip upward naturally and look plump. Most effects of Botox procedures wear off over time so there's little to no risk of severe reactions appearing to the patient.

Tips to Prevent Complications After a Botox Treatment

Botox best works to add volume and definition to the lips when done through a series of injections. While the number of injections varies on the desired outcome, patients can expect around 3 to 6 Botox injections during the procedure. Most treatments can relax the muscles for 3 to 6 months until it wears off.

Just like all surgeries, knowing what to do for aftercare is important to alleviate possible discomfort and minimize side effects. Aside from following the post-operative instructions from the surgeon, here are some things to note to get the best possible results without any complications:

1. Use cold compress

Swelling around the injected area is highly likely after a cosmetic injection procedure. Applying ice packs on the lips can greatly reduce lumps and bruising during recovery. It can also help to gently massage antibiotic creams on the site to lessen redness and avoid the risk of infections.

2. Apply topical solutions (Arnica gel)

Arnica gel is a plant-based homeopathic treatment that eases pain and sore muscles. It comes from the flowers of the arnica plant, an herb that's found in mountainous regions in Europe, East Asia, Canada, and the northern U.S. Many gather the plant's flowers and use them to treat inflammation from sore throats, insect bites, and muscle pain.

Over the years, arnica has been believed to speed up the healing process of most bruises and wounds. It's ideally applied on the lips before the procedure as arnica should never be used on open wounds. Another option is to take arnica oral supplements just a few days before the treatment to prevent bruising. Both topical solutions and tablets are sold over-the-counter in most drugstore chains or local and organic grocery stores.

3. Avoid engaging in strenuous exercise

Botox patients are advised to hold off on going to the gym or doing home workouts within 24 hours to 48 hours after the injection. Increased blood pressure and heart rate can worsen swelling and bruising, delaying the recovery of the lip injection area.

Individuals should also steer clear of activities that make them sweat a lot as in most cases, wiping off the sweat can apply pressure to the face and lips. If you really want to get moving, light walks may suffice until the Botox settles in. Facial exercises such as frowning and smiling can also do wonders to help the effects of Botox show sooner.

4. Keep your head elevated when sleeping

When turning in for the night after receiving an injectable dermal filler or Botox, avoid lying on the stomach side and keep the head elevated on pillows during sleeping. This is observed to avoid swelling and possibly messing up the dermal fillers.

5. Stay hydrated

Drink plenty of water after the procedure but avoid using plastic or reusable straws. Keeping hydrated, along with maintaining a healthy diet, can contribute to younger and fresher-looking skin and moisturized lips. It also takes care of the skin and significantly reduces wrinkle appearance on the face.

Alcoholic beverages should also be avoided for at least 24 hours before and after the procedure. They are a widely known blood thinner that can cause blood vessels to thin and prompt bruising and swelling in the injection area.

6. Don't wear makeup

Go makeup-free for 24 hours after the lip flip injection. Applying foundation, powder, and most especially lipstick or gloss on the lips can rub the skin and potentially spread the toxin to other areas. It's also a precaution against possible infections that may come from bacteria that will try to enter through the holes of the skin when putting on cosmetic products.

7. Avoid high-temperature areas

Exposure to high-heat places like saunas, steam rooms, and hot showers can make the blood vessels enlarge and prolong the swelling that comes after the lip injection. Post-treatment showers are best taken with lukewarm water to avoid further complications. Keep yourself cool at all times and dab ice packs on the lip area to minimize lumpiness and bruising of the lips.

8. Take medications and supplements

Like alcohol, medications such as paracetamol, ibuprofen, aspirin, and vitamin E supplements have blood-thinning properties and can trigger swelling in the area where Botox and cosmetic filler are injected. To be safe, ask the doctor for a list of medicines and oral drugs that have high risks of increasing bruising.

Why Botox Is the Preferred Lip Augmentation Treatment

The deterioration of lip volume and appearance of fine lines (medically known as perioral lines) and wrinkles on the lips gradually come as people age. Fortunately, plastic surgeons today are more knowledgeable on cosmetic fillers and lip flip procedures, giving people more viable options to improve their desired facial look.

However, while lip fillers are also effective for achieving a fuller appearance on the lips, its procedure can make the patient more prone to bumps, bruising, and redness. It's also relatively more expensive than the Botox option.

On the other hand, Botox injects a substance that amplifies the natural shape of the lips for a more all-natural appearance. As the botulinum toxin settles in the injected area, the orbicularis oris muscle is relaxed and the lips are forced to expand outward so they seem bigger. Over time, its effects naturally wear off and patients often schedule another trip to the dermatologist to maintain the fullness of the lips.

While the effect may take at least 2 weeks to appear, Botox doesn't have downtime, and patients can resume their normal activities after their treatment. Just remember to take extra precautions and follow the doctor's instructions to have a smooth recovery and avoid post-procedure complications.

Get Safe and Quality Lip Enhancement at Ethos Spa, Skin, Laser Center

Botox treatments are undoubtedly one of the recommended lip augmentation methods today that effectively restore volume on thinning lips and reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. When done by medical experts and registered professionals, the procedure poses minimal risk and assures safe recovery with mild side effects that last only for a couple of days.

We, at Ethos Spa, Skin and Laser Center, have a group of reliable and licensed doctors that can help achieve the pout you've always wanted. We are a proud provider of Botox treatments with our reliable Botox injections, lip fillers, and more. Call Ethos Spa today and schedule an appointment with our plastic surgeon to learn more about the treatment and how we can help put your best face forward.