

What are dermal fillers?

Dermal fillers are gel-like substances injected under the skin. Dermal fillers are meant to create a smoother or fuller appearance, or both.

Types of dermal fillers

Temporary fillers include the following materials:

- Hyaluronic acid, a sugar that is naturally found in the body
- Calcium hydroxyapatite, a mineral and a major component of bone
- Poly-L-lactic acid (PLLA), a biodegradable, synthetic material

There's only one FDA-approved dermal filler that is not absorbed by the body. It is made with polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA) beads suspended in a solution that contains bovine (cow) collagen. PMMA beads are tiny round, smooth, plastic beads.

FDA-approved uses of dermal fillers

Dermal fillers are [approved](#) for specific uses in people aged 22 and older. Those uses include:

- Correcting moderate-to-severe facial wrinkles and skin folds
- Increasing fullness of lips, cheeks, chin, under-eye hollows, jawline, and back of the hand
- Restoring facial fat loss in people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Correcting acne scars on the cheek

Risks of FDA-approved fillers

As with any medical procedure, there are risks involved with the use of dermal fillers. Most side effects associated with dermal fillers, such as swelling and bruising occur shortly after injection and many resolve in a few days to weeks. In some cases, side effects may emerge weeks, months, or years later.

Common risks include:

- Bruising
- Redness
- Swelling
- Pain
- Tenderness
- Itching
- Rash

- Difficulty in performing activities (only observed when injected into the back of the hand)

Less common risks include:

- Inflammation such as swelling or redness may develop near the dermal filler injection site following viral or bacterial illnesses or infections, vaccinations, or dental procedures
- Raised bumps in or under the skin (nodules or granulomas) that may need to be treated with injections, oral antibiotics, or surgically removed
- Infection
- Open or draining wounds
- A sore at the injection site
- Allergic reaction
- Necrosis (tissue death)

People should be tested for allergies before receiving dermal fillers made with certain materials, especially materials derived from animals, such as collagen.

Unintended injection into blood vessels

The most serious risk associated with dermal fillers is accidental injection into a blood vessel. Filler that enters a blood vessel can cause skin necrosis (death of tissue), stroke, or blindness. While the chances of this happening are low, if it does happen, the resulting complications can be serious and may be permanent.

Removing Dermal Fillers

If you want to have fillers removed or reduced because of side effects, you may need additional procedures to reduce the filler or surgery to remove it. These procedures carry their own risks. Be aware that it may be difficult or impossible to remove some. Do request and read the patient labeling information on FDA-approved injectable dermal fillers from your licensed health care provider.

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/dermal-filler-dos-and-donts-wrinkles-lips-and-more>