

Hot Lips

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Long recognized as a symbol of beauty, love and fertility, full lips are in more than ever. Thin lips carry the opposite image of aging and poor health. There is no gold standard for lips, in that beautiful lips should be balanced or the lower lip fuller or the upper lip fuller. Indeed one's facial features help dictate which one will be the best look for that individual.

Over the years doctors have placed many different things in lips to make them fuller. In this article I will review some of the different ways people have achieved hot lips.

Fat, yes fat has been used to make lips fuller. It was a popular implant 10-15 years ago and lost popularity as it would all disappear. Recently fat has undergone a rebirth. With improvement in the collecting technique and microdroplet placement fat has been found to have staying power for many. The down side is, it requires a procedure, and in the constantly moving lip may be unpredictable.

Scar tissue (dermis), fascia, and muscle have all been transplanted from one part of the body to the lips. These surgical procedures leave the patient with two sore areas-- the lips and the donor site. For most of the cases, these materials break down and disappear.

Collagen, or as it is called, Zyplast™, comes from a cow, and is probably one of the older lip implants. It has been used for many years with great success. Since it comes from a cow, patients need to have a skin test and wait one month before plumping can begin. This helps identify patients who may be allergic to the material. The skin test is not one hundred percent; some patients may still be allergic or develop allergies to the material over time. To help with the problem of skin testing and allow patients same day treatments, Inamed™, Cosmoplast™ and Cosmoderm™ which are prepared from human collagen are also available. One of the plusses for these treatments is they are used to correct fine wrinkles and lines. They also contain some numbing medicine so they generally sting for only a minute. The down side is that they may last from a few weeks to a few months when placed in the lips.

Cymetra™ (Lifecell corporation) is also made from human skin, so no skin test is necessary. The skin comes from an accredited tissue bank, and then all the cells are removed and it is freeze dried. It consists of 100-200 micron pieces of the supporting elements of skin. Patients generally experience swelling after it is injected into the lips. Taking anti-inflammatories or steroids before the treatment decreases the swelling and seems to help more of it to stay. Approximately 50% of patients may retain a portion of the Cymetra. For those who break it down, it generally will last 3-4 months. It does contain an anesthetic agent, but some patients prefer additional anesthesia.

Hyaluronic acids such as Restalyn™ are on the horizon. Hyaluronic acid is the material found between our cells. The material does not require any skin testing and in Europe has been found to last slightly longer than bovine (cow) collagen. It is not available in the

United States unless you are part of an FDA study. This can be used to treat fine lines and deeper furrows. The down side is there is no numbing medicine in the current preparations so a topical anesthetic agent will help to make the treatment more comfortable.

Artefill™ and Artecoll™ will soon be FDA approved according to industry watchers. These are hard contact lense beads coated with bovine collagen. Therefore a skin test is necessary 30 days prior to treatment. The implant will provide long term correction according to European doctors who have been using it. As with any injectable, lumpiness is a potential problem. With collagen it is not a problem because collagen will disappear, however with long term implants lumpiness may be managed by massage, injecting steroids, and rarely excision.

Radiance™ is micro-spheres of calcium hydroxy appetite, the framework of bone. The material has been used for thirty years by orthopedic and oral surgeons. It is FDA approved for use in the bladder and voice box, and is used as an off label application for making lips fuller. The material seems well tolerated by the body, and studies in other areas of the body have shown the material is still there at four years. As mentioned above lumpiness may be a potential problem.

Gore-Tex™ is so versatile it works in rain suits and lips. Advanta™, Soft-form™, Gore-Tex are all similar products which have been used to make lips fuller. A few small incisions are made and the material is placed in the lips. The up side is that it is permanent. The down sides are the material is often felt, lips may become hard, and the material may work its way out.

Alloderm sheets (Lifecell Corp) is the sheet form of Cymetra. The majority of patients seem to retain the material at the end of the year-89% of patients in one study. It requires a simple office procedure like Gore-Tex.

V-Y advancement This is a surgical procedure which rolls the pink lining from the undersurface of the lip out to make the lip fuller. This is a permanent change, however the scarring on the undersurface of the lip may make the lip feel tight or move differently.

Lip advancement is an office procedure which is used for the patient with a very thin, flat lip. Generally if one has a small lip, they will benefit from removing some of the skin next to the pink part of the lip and rolling the pink part out. This will create a permanent increase in the size and shape of the lip. The down side is a possible visible scar (generally lipstick covers) and assymetries.

Some people are born with thin lips. Others find that as a result of the aging process their full lips begin to thin. Whatever the cause, there are some exciting options for patients. Discuss the options with your cosmetic surgeon to decide which ones may work best for you.