

De-Mystifying Injectable Fillers

By Ryan Greene, MD, PhD



As a facial plastic surgeon, many of the patients I see come in requesting more information about Botox® and injectable fillers. Even in this age of Google and mass marketing by pharmaceutical companies, it is quite obvious to me that there is more confusion than clarity. With new injectable agents continually added to the physician's arsenal, this ambiguity continues to grow.

"What do you think I need?" is the most common question that begins many of my patient appointments. I usually turn this question around to the patient by asking, "What do YOU think it is that you need?" Aesthetic surgery is less about needs, and more about desires. Injectable treatments are designed to address patient concerns in an effort to improve appearance and make patients feel better about themselves.

I always enjoy educating patients who come see me to inquire about injectable treatments and discuss the various treatment options. As a physician, one of my core responsibilities is to educate my patients; merely treating a patient is not enough. As someone who has done a lot of teaching in my career, I relish this opportunity.

Most patients have heard of Restylane® and Juvederm®, two examples of hyaluronic acid fillers. Because they are generally very safe and if used correctly, can achieve natural results, they are extremely popular. I have an extremely high patient satisfaction rate when using these

products. And while discomfort is typically very minimal, patient comfort has been further enhanced with the addition of lidocaine in their formulations.

Radiesse® is another commonly used filler, which has a more firm composition. As such, it is not a good choice for delicate areas like the lips. However, it can produce great results filling in other areas of the face. Radiesse® is unique in that its stiffness makes it a good 'building block' for the face. I often use it to augment the cheekbones or the jaw line to recreate a more youthful facial contour.

One product that has created a buzz lately is Sculptra®. This product has been used for years to restore facial volume in patients with HIV-associated lipoatrophy. With the recent release of Sculptra Aesthetic®, it is now also used as a 'volumizer' in patients who would like to restore a youthful fullness to their face. Among its many benefits is its potential to last for an extended period of time.

It is impossible to provide a comprehensive discussion about injectable fillers in a brief article. However, I feel that it is important for patients to be aware of the available choices and what can be achieved. Whether a patient desires fuller lips, a more chiseled jaw line, or improvement in their facial wrinkles, they should know that there are excellent choices available. However, it is extremely important to seek out a physician who has extensive experience with these treatments, understands facial aesthetics, and is committed to achieving your goals. stb

*Ryan Greene, M.D., Ph.D., is the director of Greene.MD Facial Plastic Surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery and is a member of the American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery. He completed his residency in Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Illinois at Chicago and was among an elite group selected for a fellowship in Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at the University of Miami. He was a contributing editor in *The Keys to Aesthetic Medicine: Hyaluronic Fillers, Neurotoxins & Beyond*, a textbook on Botox and injectable fillers. He has won numerous awards and has published extensively and co-authored many textbook chapters on rhinoplasty and other areas of facial plastic surgery. Dr. Greene sees patients at offices in Fort Lauderdale and Boca Raton. He can be reached at 954-651-6600 and www.DrRyanGreene.com.*



RYAN GREENE, MD, PHD