

Lip rejuvenation

Also known as lip augmentation

Introduction

We are all born with different shaped and sized lips. Some people never develop adequate fullness of the lip and others develop loss of the soft tissue volume of the lip as they age. Sun damage, gravity, changes to facial muscular activity, skeletal and teeth remodelling, as well as smoking, worsen the appearance of the lip with time.

As the lip ages it begins to flatten and thin out. The corners droop and lines start to form on the skin surrounding the lip, much like “crow’s feet” around the eyes. Rough, dry, red patches of skin caused by sun damage can also be seen in some cases.

The entire face tends to droop and sag with the loss of skin, fat, muscle, bone and teeth. Sun exposure also causes spots and colour changes on the face and lip area.

What can be done to improve the appearance of the lip area?

Aging of the lip is an inevitable process for all individuals. However, the appearance of the lip area can be improved safely if the appropriate treatment is administered by a qualified trained practitioner. When treating the lips it is important to consider movement, surface and volume related issues and teeth and bony architecture.

Movement of the lips involves smiling, mouth frowning, chin puckering and kissing. These actions can be treated with muscle relaxing injections and dermal or tissue fillers to bring these back into a more neutral, “happier”, relaxed position and reduce the active lines around the mouth or even improve a gummy smile. However, passive or static lines (lines at rest) may need a combination of treatments such as laser resurfacing and injectable fillers for best results.

Surface issues can be caused by sun damage or the effects of smoking and recurrent expression. These actions can result in static (fixed) wrinkles, which may be improved by topical treatments (such as fruit acids, topical vitamin A), fractional laser resurfacing, total laser resurfacing or plasma resurfacing. Other options such as dermabrasion or deep chemical peeling can also be utilised. Static lines can also be treated with injectable fillers in some cases.

Volume is often required to replace loss of tissue or bulk. Injectable fillers can be used to re-inflate areas such as thin lips while keeping them in proportion so “duck lips” are not created. The aim of this treatment is to improve appearance without creating a fake-looking, strange or exaggerated effect.

Teeth and bony architecture around the mouth region must not be forgotten when treating the lip area. The input of a dentist or orthodontic specialist may be helpful in this regard.