



Marianne Mertens, MD

Sint Michielskaai 8

Antwerp Belgium

Phone: +011 (32) 32481466

SOFT TISSUE FILLERS

What Are Soft Tissue Fillers?

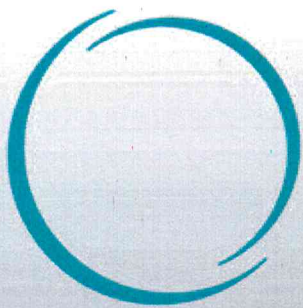
Consultation & Preparation

The Procedure

Risks & Safety

Results

Cost



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®



WHAT ARE SOFT TISSUE FILLERS?

Soft tissue fillers help to diminish facial lines and restore volume and fullness in the face. As we age, our faces naturally lose subcutaneous fat. The facial muscles are then working closer to the skin surface, so smile lines and crow's feet become more apparent. The facial skin also stretches a bit, adding to this loss of facial volume. Other factors that affect the facial skin include sun exposure, heredity and lifestyle.

Soft tissue fillers can be used to:

- Plump thin lips
- Enhance shallow contours
- Soften facial creases and wrinkles
- Improve the appearance of recessed scars

Soft tissue fillers can be very helpful in those with early signs of aging, or as a value-added part of facial rejuvenation surgery.

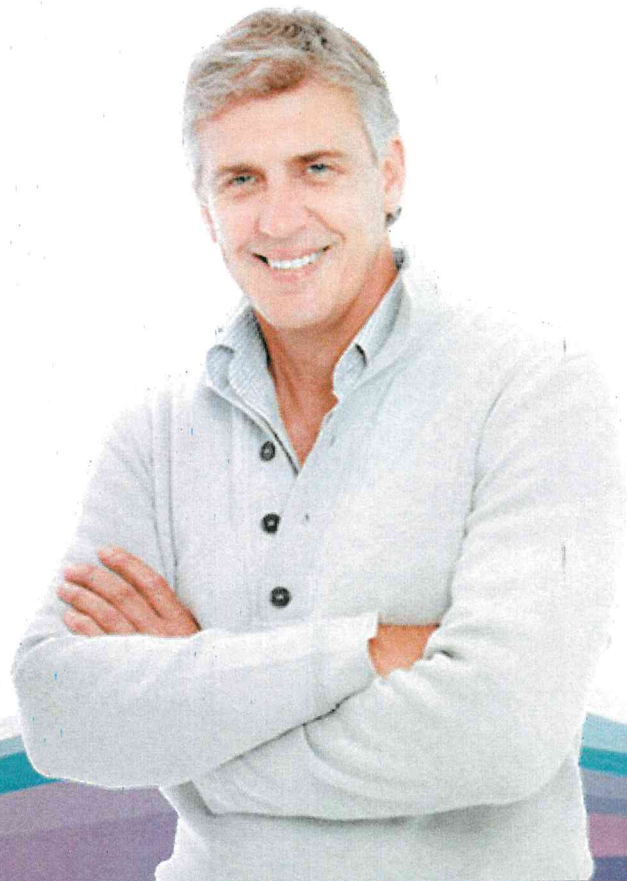
For some patients, surgery such as a facelift, brow lift or eye lift may be the best approach. Non-surgical rejuvenation treatments, such as soft tissue fillers, cannot achieve the same results, but may help delay the time when consideration of a facelift becomes appropriate.

Soft tissue fillers are a good option for you if you:

- Are physically healthy
- Don't smoke
- Have a positive outlook and realistic goals for the improvement of your appearance

There are several different kinds of fillers. They differ in chemical makeup, longevity and softness. Softer fillers are used in the lips, for example, while sturdier fillers might be desired to enhance cheekbones. Your surgeon will determine with you the best type and volume of filler needed for your particular areas of concern.

For many people, the use of "off-the-shelf" fillers can be a simple office-based procedure that can nicely enhance their appearance. These fillers are very predictable, and have relatively minimal risks and side effects. These fillers are often injected in the surgeon's office or medspa.



CONSULTATION & PREPARING FOR THE PROCEDURE

During your consultation, be prepared to discuss:

- Your goals
- Medical conditions, drug allergies and medical treatments
- Current medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco and drug use
- Any past treatment with soft tissue fillers, botulinum toxin therapy, laser or other non-surgical facial procedures as well as any prior facial surgery

Your surgeon may also:

- Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- Discuss your available options
- Examine and measure your face
- Take photographs
- Recommend a course of treatment
- Discuss likely outcomes of using soft tissue fillers and any risks or potential complications

Your plastic surgeon will carefully explain:

- Your course of treatment
- The type of filler recommended in your case and why
- Expected results
- The longevity of the result

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon questions. It's important you understand all aspects of soft tissue fillers. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of pre-treatment stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.



THE PROCEDURE

If you choose to utilize packaged soft tissue fillers, the plastic surgeon, or his specially-trained nurse, will evaluate your facial appearance, skin tone and areas of your face to be treated. Strategic points on your face may be marked as the appropriate injection sites for the filler. Photographs may be taken of the areas to be treated.

The injection sites will be cleansed with an antibacterial agent. Pain at the injection site may be ameliorated by use of a very cold instrument to chill the skin, anesthetic ointment to numb the skin or injection of local anesthesia. While not painless, the injections are usually easily tolerated.

Injection usually takes only a few moments per site. The process of injecting, massaging, and evaluating the result is performed and additional filler added as needed. Depending on the number of areas to be treated, the whole process may be as short as 15 minutes, or as long as an hour.

Once the results are deemed satisfactory, any markings will be cleansed off. You may be offered an ice pack to reduce swelling and alleviate discomfort. Although the area may feel a bit tender for a day or two, it is usually not painful enough to require any medication.

Other Options

Some patients may want to consider using fat harvested from their own body which can then be re-injected to enhance facial fullness, fill creases or build up shallow contours.

Fat injection requires a more extensive procedure than “off-the-shelf” soft tissue fillers. A “donor area” must be determined (such as the abdomen or buttocks) and liposuction is used to extract the fat. The suctioned fat can then be transferred to the face as a graft.

The grafted fat then has to redevelop a blood supply in order to survive. In the face, most of the transferred fat usually survives, but the results can be a bit less predictable. The use of fat transfer involves additional discomfort in the donor area. This is a minor surgical procedure that can be performed in the surgeon’s treatment room or in an operating room.



RISKS & SAFETY

The decision to use soft tissue fillers is extremely personal. You will have to decide if the benefits will help you achieve your goals and if the risks and potential complications are acceptable. Your plastic surgeon and/ or staff will explain, in detail, any risks. You will be asked to sign consent forms to ensure that you fully understand the procedure, as well as the risks and potential complications.

Complications from fillers are uncommon. Potential risks vary depending on the specific filler used and the relative permanence of the filler substance and include:

Potential risks vary depending on the specific filler used and the relative permanence of the filler substance and include:

- Acne-like skin eruptions
- Asymmetry
- Bruising, bleeding from the injection site, swelling
- Damage to the skin that results in a wound and possible scarring
- Infection at the injection site
- Lumps
- Palpability of the filler under the surface of the skin
- Skin rash with itching
- Skin redness
- Under- or over-correction of wrinkles

These risks and others will be fully discussed prior to your consent. It is important that you address all your questions directly with your plastic surgeon. Although good results are expected from your procedure, there is no guarantee. In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single procedure. Most fillers dissipate over time. To maintain your correction, you will need to consider repeating the injection process at intervals.



RESULT

The results of soft tissue augmentation using fillers are apparent almost immediately. Your initial appearance after treatment with any filler may include:

- An “over-filled” appearance to treated areas
- Mild swelling or bruising
- Temporary numbness or redness

These conditions can be alleviated with topical icing and will improve within a matter of hours or just a few days.

When your own fat is the injected filler, the healing process is longer and may take a few weeks.

The results of soft tissue fillers are not permanent. The continued aging of your face and variables in the absorption of fillers will affect how long your results last.



COST

Prices for soft tissue fillers vary. Your plastic surgeon will determine what you need and what it will cost. Many plastic surgeons offer

- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a

patient financing plans, so be sure to ask.

Health insurance does not cover cosmetic fillers or cosmetic surgery.

Choose a professional. Although tissue augmentation is a quick, in-office procedure that can produce a marked improvement in facial fullness and a more youthful appearance, effective and safe use requires a physician with specialized training and a thorough understanding of facial anatomy to recommend and inject an appropriate filler.

Choosing a plastic surgeon to treat your face with injectable fillers means that your treatment will be performed by someone who not only has training in injection therapy, but in all types of non-surgical and surgical facial rejuvenation. When choosing a plastic surgeon, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with him or her are just as important as the final cost of the procedure.

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting an American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) member you can trust. ASPS member surgeons meet rigorous standards:

- Board certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery® (ABPS) or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada®;

minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training

- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety each year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed or Medicare-certified surgical facilities

Do not be confused by other official sounding boards and certifications.

The ABPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has approved medical specialty boards since 1934. There is no ABMS-recognized certifying board with "cosmetic surgery" in its name. By choosing a member of The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you are choosing a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board-certified by the ABPS or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

This brochure is intended strictly for educational purposes. It is not intended to make any representations or warranties about the outcome of any procedure. It is not a substitute for a thorough, in-person consultation with a board certified plastic surgeon.