



Low Plastic Surgery (LPS)

Dr. Lowe's Facts about Temporary Soft Tissue Fillers

How do I get started?

It is important prior to any cosmetic procedure for patients to spend some time educating themselves about the pros and cons of soft tissue fillers. Although patients who undergo soft tissue fillers are typically happy, this elective operation is not for everybody. The big risks of these procedures are pain, bleeding, contour irregularity, swelling, and under-correction. Read the educational materials provided and on our website including consent forms prior to your injection. Make sure that your physician is Board Certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery or American Academy of Dermatology. Please check out websites and links at: www.drjlowe.com

Am I a candidate for soft tissue fillers?

Patients with localized soft tissue defects, minimal weight changes, little tissue redundancy, or areas of deflation or contour irregularities are usually the best candidates for soft tissue fillers. However, fillers can be an excellent addition to any cosmetic procedure. Patients considering fillers need to decide if the risks are worth it or not? Soft tissue fillers require 1-2 treatments yearly for reliable results in most cases. In fact fillers are best suited for patients who are seeking a subtle non-permanent improvement in skin contour. Typical areas that filler is injected include the face, cheeks, lips, forehead, and scars. The filler is taken off the self and require no harvesting. Once the filler is applied the results often improve over the first several months and then fade by 6-8 months. It is best for patients to avoid massaging stiff areas for the first week. Dr. Lowe often combines soft tissue fillers with a number of cosmetic procedures to ensure the best results. A frank discussion with a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist will help patients make the right decision about this procedure.

Are soft tissue fillers covered by health insurance?

Soft tissue fillers are by definition cosmetic procedures. It is not covered by insurance as a stand-alone procedure. Some patients have contour irregularities following reconstruction that may be treated with other techniques such as fat transfer but this is included in revision medical coding. Dr. Lowe will often use fat grafting during breast reconstruction, scar revisions, or flap reconstruction and it is not considered cosmetic in these situations. Many patients undergoing medically covered procedures choose to pay for soft tissue fillers to enhance the cosmetic outcome. Dr. Lowe will discuss these issues during the course of the consultation and consent process.

What is the difference between soft tissue fillers with or without local anesthesia?

There are a number of different ways to perform soft tissue fillers. Most plastic surgeons performing soft tissue injection prefer patients to be under local anesthesia to ensure patient comfort and safety. Isolated areas of injection may be performed without a local block. Local procedures require preparation and local injection that can be well managed in certain areas. In our practice soft tissue fillers are priced based on time and complexity. Patients requiring less work and time are rewarded by a smaller fee. Patients rarely complain of significant pain following soft tissue fillers regardless of the technique. A consultation with a board certified plastic surgeon, allows patients to determine the technique best suited for them.

What is the best soft tissue filler?

There are a variety of products available to treat soft tissue defects or wrinkles. Most products are chosen based on the physician's expertise and experience. The most popular soft tissue fillers include: Juvederm, Restylane, Radiesse, and human fat. All products have failed to be completely effective or predictable to date. Every year a technology or marketing tool is introduced and every year many products are disproven. The problem with certain products is they sound good but are very expensive, and patients often fail to see better results. If it sounds too good to be true, it is too good to be true. We have been performing soft tissue fillers for over 15 years and have found many products to be quite predictable in most cases. There are many fillers that hold promise now and in the future. It is hard enough to get consistent, lasting, and satisfactory results even with scientifically proven products. The best products depend on the patient's anatomy, preference, and willingness to compromise. Many patients combine soft tissue fillers with other

procedures such as Botulinum Toxin, Laser resurfacing, Intense Pulse Light, and surgery. A consultation with a board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist can help patients choose the best option.

Is there a way to know the results of soft tissue fillers?

Temporary fillers (i.e. Juvederm, Restylane, and Radiesse) are a good way to treat patients who are not considering surgery. If a patient likes temporary filler but would like a more permanent result, fat grafting is often the best long term option. In many cases, fat grafting can address defects that are too large for a temporary filler to handle. Patients should talk to a board certified plastic surgeon to help determine what to expect before and after fat transfer.

Will other people know I had soft tissue filler?

The results of soft tissue fillers are usually subtle with the first several applications. Patients do tend to look overdone if the treatments are repeated too many times. Dr. Lowe always tries to achieve a subtle improvement of youth. All fillers are injected using a small needle with multiple injection sites. The injection sites are very small, placed in natural skin creases, and are the size of a needle stick. It is usually better to start small at your first treatment to ensure you like the results and you do not experience complications. Small contour irregularities can be seen due to surgeon error, complications, bruising, or patient genetics (some patients react to fillers). The best way to avoid evidence of soft tissue filler is to follow post-operative instructions on message and wound care. Patients require yearly treatments in most cases to see ideal results. Only a limited amount of filler can be applied safely to any one area at a time. Patients should have a frank discussion with their physician to help them make the right decision about their treatment regimen.

Does the effect of soft tissue fillers last forever?

The results of soft tissue off the shelf fillers are temporary. Some soft tissue fillers last 6-8 months and others last for more than a year. If a patient likes temporary soft tissue fillers they can consider a more permanent option of fat transfer surgery. In most cases, temporary soft tissue fillers are the best option for patients seeking a short term solution without surgery, risk, or substantial cost. It is noteworthy that soft fillers on the market today provide an effective and predictable short term result. The fillers are either light like jelly or thick like jam. The lighter products are more subtle, softer, and last a shorter period. The thicker products are better for deeper wrinkles and last longer, and may be result in more stiffness or palpability.

Do temporary soft tissue fillers cost a lot?

The cost of temporary soft tissue applications is based primarily on the amount of product injected. Patients are always encouraged to combine soft tissue fillers with other nonsurgical or surgical procedures. By combining procedures there is a decrease in cost. Great results sometimes require multiple treatments or maintenance. Many patients will space soft tissue fillers out over time to fit into their schedule and budget. Future treatments are often less time consuming and can be performed with less anesthetic. Patients can usually tell right away if soft tissue fillers are right for them: and most patients a happy with the results.

Where and when should I have soft tissue fillers?

An important decision for patients considering soft tissue fillers is where and when. Soft tissue fillers are usually performed in our clinic with local anesthetic. Some patients request sedation with a medication by mouth and require a ride home with an adult. These procedures usually take 30 minutes to perform and patients remain numb for 1-2 hours. Most patients will be noticeable bruised or swollen for 2-3 days after the procedure. Dr. Lowe performs the numbing and soft tissue filler himself. Patients who want soft tissue filler on the same day as the consultation are encouraged to review the consent forms prior to the consultation.

What are the restrictions after filler application?

The recovery from soft tissue fillers is usually predictable. Patients are asked to limit activity for 24 hours and ice the area for 20-30 minutes. Patients should avoid aspirin or NSAIDS (i.e. Advil, Ibuprofen, Aleve, etc.) for 5-7 days prior to application to decrease the risk of bruising. Patients will not be able to see the true results of soft tissue filler for 1-2 weeks. Patients report swelling, numbness, contour irregularities, and minor pain for 3-7 days after treatment.

What about patient safety?

There are a variety of safety concerns related to temporary soft tissue fillers. Many of the concerns are related to risk of adverse reactions to injection. However, in most cases the safety of soft tissue fillers is most dependent on the individual doing the injection. Soft tissue injection is an elective operation reserved in for patients in good health in clinic setting. Drs. Jim Lowe and Julie Lowe are physician specialists, who perform real procedures, in a real medical clinic. As a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) or the American Academy of Dermatology both doctors are required to follow guidelines designed to ensure the best patient safety and outcomes. You can also always be assured in our practice that you will get fresh and uncontaminated product at the agreed upon dose in the appropriate location. For further information about safety and credentials go to: www.drjlowe.com

Should I wait and think about my options?

Soft tissue fillers are a lifestyle decision. Although the procedure carries limited risks, the visible benefits can be subtle. Patients undergoing treatment are able to see instant results. Patient should choose a board certified plastic surgeon that they trust, takes time, reviews risks, and puts safety first. One of the most important aspects of the procedures is complete cosmetic care and follow-up. The biggest complaint from patients is that they did not get enough filler. If a patient wants more filler and it is indicated, patients simply pay per vial. It is usually best to stick with one vial at your first application to ensure the best outcome at the best price. Temporary soft tissue fillers are very popular and are often the right thing for the right person.

What are Dr. Lowe's take home points?

1. Understand risks (contour irregularities, stiffness, asymmetry, and swelling).
2. The results from filler injection are instant, but bruising and swelling usually lasts for several days.
3. Topical numbing medication and local anesthetic blocks are key to comfort and success
4. You get what you pay for. If you want more filler and it is indicated get more.
5. Most fillers last for 6months to 1 year. It is difficult to over-correct with one application.
6. Patients who like temporary fillers (i.e. Juvederm or Restylane), should consider something permanent.
7. Fat transfer can offer a permanent solution but usually requires surgery and significant recovery.
8. Fillers can be combined with other minor cosmetic procedures such as Botox or Laser treatments.
9. Have fun with fillers. Talk to your physician about how fillers might address your cosmetic concerns.
10. Physician certification and safety matters. No one wants a bad outcome from a minor procedure.