**Hyaluronic Acid (HA) Dermal Filler: Patient Information and Aftercare**

**What is Hyaluronic Acid?**

Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring sugar chain molecule found in all skin and soft tissues throughout the body, identical across species.

Dermal fillers are manufactured, usually through fermentation and cross linking with proteins to produce a clear, sterile gel for injection into the skin.

In the UK, there are over 160 brands on the market due in some part to weak regulation. Not all hyaluronic acids are the same, each brand has a range of ‘tissue tailored’ products designed for specific results. One size does not fit all. At this clinic we use only tried and tested brands. If you have a particular brand you prefer, please discuss this with us.

Leading and well-established brands include Juvederm, Restylane, Teoxane, Bolotero and Profhilo.

**How Does it Work?**

Hyaluronic Acid dermal fillers are a clear sterile gel in a syringe for injection into the skin providing instant correction. Hyaluronic acid attracts and binds water in the skin, providing volume and hydration, but also ‘cushioning’ and supporting structural collagen and elastin fibres and providing a medium, or carrier, for chemical messages between the cells. We use both needles and cannulae where needed for the best results, with the most comfortable delivery

**Used to Treat**

* To correct or enhance facial contours; cheeks, temples, jawline, nose, chin.
* To define, correct or enhance lips
* To soften and correct facial wrinkles or folds
* To restore lost volume in hands to reduce the appearance of veins and tendons
* To improve the tone, texture and hydration of the skin.

**Is it Safe?**

Dermal fillers are safe, but not risk free, your practitioner will discuss all the risks and benefits with you at consultation and again prior to treatment.

**Am I Suitable for Treatment?**

The practitioner will take a detailed medical history to ensure you have no conditions that might increase risk of unwanted side effects, consultation is also important to discuss your expectations and whether or not this treatment is able to meet them.

**Does it Hurt?**

Most leading brands also contain a local anaesthetic (lidocaine - which may rarely produce a positive result in professional sports level anti-doping tests) and we will apply

topical anaesthetic cream, or ice, prior to treatment to numb the skin. Treatment need not be painful.

**Before Treatment**

All make up will need to be removed prior to treatment, so please come ‘fresh faced’ if possible.

Alcohol, aspirin, Ibuprofen and a range of dietary supplements including; St. Johns Wort, fish oils, Gingko Biloba, Vitamins C and E- may all contribute to bruising and are best avoided 24 hours before treatment.

Treatment cannot be administered if there is an active skin infection, including acne or cold sores or if you are unwell- including colds, coughs, sore throats etc.

Do contact the clinic to discuss any illness or new medicines prior to attending.

**How Long will it Last?**

Longevity does vary between products, and between individuals, but most will last between 6 months and 18 months dependant on product choice. If you choose not to maintain the results with further treatment, your skin will return to its pre-treatment state over time.

**Be aware of the necessary after care advice and that your schedule allows for you to follow it.**

**After Treatment**

Most people are able to continue with normal activities with immediate improvement in their appearance. Some will have some redness, pin prick marks, possibly swelling- particularly in the lips. Possibly bruising. Any swelling and bruising may be more apparent the next day.

* It is advisable that you do not touch the area for **6 hours**.
* Avoid extreme cold, including ice packs that are directly applied to the skin. If necessary you can apply a cool compress to the area to reduce any discomfort or swelling. If you have had a local nerve infiltration injection please do not consume any hot or cold drinks until your sensation has returned to normal. You must also be careful when eating so as to avoid biting your lip.
* Please avoid extreme facial expressions, alcohol consumption and do not apply makeup for **12 hours.**
* For **48 hours** you should avoid exposure to UV and extreme heat i.e. sauna, steam, sun beds, very hot showers, strenuous exercise etc, as this may increase discomfort and swelling.
* You are advised to avoid alcohol, vigorous exercise, sun bathing, and extremes of heat or cold for 14 days post treatment. These activities have been found to increase and prolong swelling.
* You should avoid facial massages or skin resurfacing until the area has healed fully.

**Swelling may worsen in the first 24 hours, and then should settle within the first few days. Cold compress packs can be helpful in reducing swelling. As a consequence of swelling, the product may feel harder or lumpy and you may notice some asymmetry. The final result may be judged at 2 weeks.**

**Bruising may take a few days to appear, arnica gel or the ZOE aftercare products can be helpful in clearing bruising. It is advisable to avoid aspirin and alcohol for 12-48 hours after treatment. Tenderness should settle as swelling goes down.**

Athletes should be aware some ingredients in the product may show a positive in ‘anti-dope tests’

**When to seek urgent review:**

**Allergy or infection** Thankfully they are extremely uncommon. If you get a painful or itchy bump or swelling near an injection site please contact the practice immediately for a review. **Please contact your practitioner if redness, tenderness, itching or swelling worsens after 3 days, rather than settling.**

**When immediate help could be required:**

**Anaphylaxis** is a severe allergic reaction which in itself is life threatening and requires immediate medical attention. Symptoms of a severe allergic reaction can include shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, difficulty swallowing, swelling of the tongue, eyelids, lips, hoarseness of the voice, stomach pain, nausea or diarrhoea. If you have any of the above symptoms, please report to your nearest Accident and Emergency Department or call 999 for an ambulance.

Should you experience any unexpected side effects or any that concern you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Feedback**

Amy Robbins is accredited by Save Face, a voluntary register of practitioners and clinics such as ours. The accreditation process is robust and provides independent, third party validation and verification of our qualifications, safety and quality of care and service.

Your feedback and testimonials help others to select/judge our service and enable us to audit our practice and ensure we maintain standards.

We welcome feedback directly to the practice via the website or the Contemporary Aesthetics website with both having links to the Save Face website for feedback. Emails, Facebook, Google and Instagram reviews are also more than welcome.