

# A E D I T

## A E S T H E T I C   E D I T

### Are Injectables Changing Your Smile?

The smile staring back at you may not be the one you once knew.



Perhaps the most crucial component in maintaining a natural yet aesthetically appealing smile is symmetry. The lips are a vital component to the **balance** and aesthetics of the face, says **Neda Mehr, MD**, a board certified dermatologist in Newport Beach, CA. “According to science, the lips ideally should take up 40 percent of the width of the lower face with the upper lip being half the size of the lower lip from the front view and projecting two millimeters further out than the upper lip from the side view,” Dr. Mehr explains. But that isn't the smile that most of us have naturally, which is where strategically placed injectables come in.

#### What Comes First: Injectables or Cosmetic Dentistry?

In the anti-aging smile game, many elements factor into how the pout, mouth, and lower face as a whole looks, including the proportion of the lips, the teeth, the gum lines, and even the degree to which the jaw and jawline extend. While injectables are a big part of the preservation and/or rejuvenation, cosmetic dentistry can be equally important. Whether you plan on incorporating a bit of both or just one, how do you know which procedure to do first?

Dr. Mehr recommends starting with the mouth. “Many times, having a tooth extracted or getting veneers can change the symmetry and contours of their face, she notes. Ideally, there will be synchronicity between your treatment plans. If not, instances can arise where fillers or injectables negate the effects of otherwise excellent dental work. For example, when the teeth are hiding under a layer of excessive filler, the work – be it orthodontics, whitening, or **veneers** – can be overshadowed by lips that are too large. Patients can't fully appreciate the dental work without the perfect frame to complement and enhance it, says **Anjali Rajpal, DMD**, a cosmetic dentist in Beverly Hills. “Thus, the position of the lips is an important element in smile makeovers because they serve as the essential frame,” she notes.

## Enhance Your Lips, Maximize Your Smile

When injected judiciously, hyaluronic acid-based fillers and/or neurotoxins (read: [Botox®](#), [Dysport®](#), [Jeuneau®](#), and [Xeomin®](#)) can enhance the smile as a whole. Below are some of the ways cosmetic injectables can be used to improve the lower third of the face in a cohesive and proportional way.

### 1. FILL-ER UP

Lip injections using HA filler are a common request in most dermatology and plastic surgery offices as a quick and reliable way to shape and plump the lips. “Fillers in the lip can be an excellent option to provide both volume or hydration to the aging or asymmetric lip and highlight a person’s natural smile,” Dr. Mehr says. And there’s a way to do it that doesn’t alter the smile — unless that’s the end goal.

### 3. TURN THAT FROWN UPSIDE DOWN

As Dr. Huang explains, filler helps lift the corners of the mouth so that the mouth doesn't appear to be frowning. “We can also fill the marionette lines for less of a downturned smile or droopy mouth,” she adds. Whether or not you consider frowning or RBF (IYKYK) to be a concern, some providers consider it part of a lip filler treatment. Dr. Mehr, for example, injects filler into the lower corners of the mouth almost every time so that “patients look happy at rest.” As a result, “any attention we draw to their lips is positive,” she adds.

## How to Tell If You’re Overfilled

Another issue that can arise from disproportionate amounts of filler is harsh lip lines that blur the line between where the lips start and end. Patients that become obsessed with filling their lips blunt the lines around their lips — the vermilion border — and the lipstick lines almost bleed into their upper lip, Dr. Mehr says. “When this happens, they lose an element of their natural beauty,” she laments.

But that’s not all. Filler migration happens when a product placed in the upper lip slowly shifts from one area to another in a matter of millimeters or less. Although it’s not life-threatening and does not require treatment, migrated filler can distort the look of the lips and cause the mouth as a whole to take on a duck-like or rolled up and out appearance — especially when smiling.