

Dermal Fillers

At Purity Bridge, we use hyaluronic acid (HA) dermal fillers. HA is a naturally occurring substance in the body and can be found in the skin and other areas such as joints. HA fillers are clear gels that are injected in small amounts underneath or into the skin. Within HA fillers, there are different subtypes with thicker or thinner gels and some differences in composition.

Indications for procedure

HA fillers are used to fill out wrinkles or lines in the face and to add volume or more definition to areas of the face. They can also be used to subtly reshape some facial features. HA fillers can give a very natural rejuvenating effect to the face and they can also be used to augment or enhance areas. Some HA fillers are designed for very superficial skin use to hydrate and rejuvenate the skin surface.

Suitable areas for HA fillers include:

- Lip rejuvenation or enhancement
- Lines around the mouth and chin
- Cheek rejuvenation or enhancement
- Under eye hollowing
- Temple hollowing
- “8 point lift”/”liquid facelift” – this is when 8 specific points on each side of the face are treated with tailored amounts of HA filler to achieve a subtle rejuvenating effect on the entire face.
- Nose reshaping (“liquid rhinoplasty”)
- Jawline and chin reshaping
- Hand rejuvenation

- Deeper wrinkles that have failed to respond to botulinum toxin (Botox®) treatments
- Combination treatments with other facial rejuvenation techniques such as wrinkle reducing treatments or surgical procedures such as facelifts to complement and enhance facial rejuvenation.

Limitations of treatment

Dermal fillers are designed for subtle rejuvenating, lifting and reshaping effects. They will only achieve a mild or partial effect if you have significant skin laxity, loss of volume or facial tissue descent. In this situation, you may be advised about an alternative procedure as well as or instead of dermal fillers e.g. facelift or eyelid surgery or a more limited result may have to be accepted with HA filler treatment alone.

Large volume augmentations e.g. for lips or cheeks that disrupt or distort natural facial proportions are discouraged. As well as looking unnatural, over time your tissues may become overstretched. This is not always fully reversible.

Reshaping procedures with dermal fillers such as in the nose, jawline or chin can only reshape in certain ways and to certain extents. At times, a surgical procedure will be recommended instead of a dermal filler treatment if the result would not be possible with dermal fillers.

Contraindications for treatment

You should not have HA filler treatments in the following situations:

- You are pregnant or breastfeeding
- You have a history of lumpy or keloid scars
- If your skin is very thin such as after steroid medications, it may not be suitable for dermal filler injections or may bruise more severely.
- If you take medication such as warfarin, clopidogrel, rivaroxaban or aspirin or some over the counter/herbal supplements that thin your blood, you will be at high risk of bruising and bleeding after dermal filler treatments.
- You currently have a cold sore
- You are under 18 years old

- You have a skin infection or irritation in or near the treatment area

Please inform your clinician of **all** products taken both prescription and over the counter supplements and if you have ever suffered from cold sores. If you suffer from cold sores, you may need to take a course of antiviral medication prior to treatment to prevent reactivating the cold sores.

Procedure details

A needle or cannula (blunt-tipped needle) is used to inject the filler into the treatment areas. It takes 15 to 45 minutes depending on how many areas are being treated. An ice pack or local anaesthetic cream may be used to soothe the area prior to injection and help reduce bruising. The injection can sting a little during the procedure but most of the HA products that we use at Purity Bridge also contain local anaesthetic to aid in your comfort. The area will be gently massaged afterwards. Pre and post treatment clinical photographs of the treated areas are taken.

The amount of HA dermal filler used will depend on the number of areas to be treated and the extent of treatment required. The exact type of HA filler will be chosen according to the area of treatment and the desired effect. It is common to use a mix of thicker and thinner gel fillers to get the best effect in many patients.

If you are planning an extensive HA filler treatment, your clinician may recommend undertaking this in stages rather than all in one procedure. Your clinician will usually advise against treatment that would distort or unbalance natural facial proportions.

“Skin booster/hydrating” HA treatments may need to be designed as a series of treatments to get optimal results.

Post procedure course

Some redness and swelling occurs around the treated areas but generally reduces quickly. Please avoid sun exposure until this has resolved. There may be some initial discomfort and tenderness or bruising around the injection sites. If necessary, analgesia such as paracetamol can be taken.

Recovery

Cool compresses may be useful to reduce any swelling or bruising. Medication or supplements that increase the risk of bleeding or bruising such as aspirin, St John's wort, ibuprofen or vitamin E supplements should be avoided for 5 to 7 days. Exercise and alcohol should be avoided on the day of treatment. You can wash your face afterwards with soap or plain face washes and water. Cosmetics can be applied to your face afterwards with clean fingers and lightly.

You may be instructed to massage the treated area. However excessive touching of the treated areas after the injections should be avoided unless specifically instructed to massage them.

Complications

- Greater than anticipated bruising, swelling and tenderness at the injection sites
- Allergic reactions to HA are rare but can happen. If you are concerned about this, please ask about a patch test in advance of your treatment.
- Contour irregularities
- Asymmetrical result. Everybody has natural asymmetries so small amounts of asymmetry have to be accepted. At times, further treatment is needed to correct unexpected asymmetries.
- Dermal filler nodules or lumps
- Infection around the injection sites can occur. If it persists or the filler itself becomes infected, this can affect the results and be difficult to treat. Further procedures may be needed.
- Visibility of the filler. This is more common in thin skinned areas such as the under-eye area or if placed just underneath the skin or in large amounts. It is sometimes called the "Tindall effect" in the under-eye area when a blueish tinge can be seen due to light reflecting off superficially placed filler under thin skin.
- Undertreatment. A "touch-up" treatment can be given at your follow up appointment. In some situations, your clinician will advise that maximum effect with a dermal filler treatment has been achieved. They may recommend

alternative treatments in this scenario if you wish for further treatment of your area of concern.

- Overtreatment. If this occurs, the area is firmly massaged to help distribute it more widely and reduce the effect until the body resorbs the HA. If necessary, an injection can be used to dissolve the HA in the overtreated area. It is better to try to avoid being in this situation by subtle treatments with staged treatments planned if a greater effect is desired.
- Skin necrosis (skin tissue death). This is rare and occurs when the HA filler has blocked a blood vessel to the skin. Should you find yourself in this situation, the HA filler will be treated to dissolve it and you may require further treatment of the skin surface to improve the blood supply. Further treatment of the involved skin depends on the location and extent of the problem. Sometimes no further treatment is required other than monitoring. Corrective treatment is necessary in some instances if the area heals poorly.
- Blindness. This is very rare and occurs when the filler has blocked a blood vessel that leads to the eye. Emergency treatment to dissolve the HA filler is necessary and other treatments and/or medication may be needed. Further treatment depends on the severity of the problem and would require assessment by an Ophthalmologist (eye specialist). Although extremely rare, if this occurs it may be permanent.
- Persistent swelling. Occasionally or with repeated, long-term use of dermal fillers, the fine drainage channels in the skin (lymphatics) can become blocked or scarred. This can lead to persistent swelling or unexpected swelling after surgery in the area.
- “Filler fibrosis”. Occasionally or with repeated, long-term use of dermal fillers, firmness or scarring of the underlying facial tissues can occur. This may not cause you any ill-effects but may affect how a surgical facelift or lower blepharoplasty could be performed in the future.
- Dermal fillers do not always break down and be absorbed in the expected timeframes for the individual filler product. They can be absorbed quicker than expected, in which case the results do not last as long as expected. They can also persist in your tissues for a longer than expected time even after the effects have subsided.



Longevity of procedure

HA fillers typically last between 6 to 18 months. The duration of effect varies depending on the area (lips require more frequent treatments to maintain effects), the type of filler used and your individual metabolism or break down of the filler. Repeat treatments are needed to maintain the effects e.g. every 6 months. At Purity Bridge, we do not use permanent dermal fillers as they do not have as good a safety profile as hyaluronic acid filler.

