

# ELLE

## Lip Fillers, The Right Way

Blake Newby | November 21, 2022



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When I first decided to get lip fillers, I wasn't necessarily sure of what I did want, but I certainly knew what I *didn't* want. If you've scrolled your FYP on TikTok recently, you've probably witnessed rundowns on some of your favorite celebs and their less-than-ideal filler results — that's exactly what I aimed to avoid.

Luckily, I've been able to do just that. But only thanks to my incredible dermatologist Dr. Michelle Henry, MD. I tapped her and Los Angeles favorite, Dr. Kimberly Lee, Board Certified Facial Plastic Surgeon, to dish on the biggest mistakes made while getting lip fillers — and, most importantly, how to avoid them.

### Ask Yourself, Are You an Ideal Candidate?

"The biggest mistake people make is bringing a photo of a celebrity and hoping their lips will look the same," Dr. Lee says. "Everyone's lip anatomy is different, and the lips need to be balanced with the rest of their faces." It's why Dr. Henry *always* leads with a conservative approach. "The nose, the lips, the chin, they all work in concert," she insists.

The lip itself also serves as a guide. “If someone has a really, really, really thin lip, there’s only so much you can do,” Dr. Henry reiterates. “If the lips are really bound down, it may not accommodate as much filler — at least not quickly. We’d have to go really slowly.” Additionally, a fuller lip can often accommodate more filler and actually needs *more* filler to result in a visual difference. “A really small lip I can get away with half a syringe to see a change,” she continues. “But in a fuller lip, if they wanna see a difference, sometimes I need a full syringe and will have them come back in two weeks to layer it. The body accommodates it better and more naturally when we do it slowly.”

### Opt for The “Right” Look

According to Dr. Lee, the lower lip should *always* be larger than the upper lip, so it’s important to maintain that proportion to avoid scrutiny from curious eyes — a point that Dr. Henry drives home. “If I look at someone and the first thing I think about are lips, then it’s disrupting the harmony of the face,” Dr. Henry says. “You should say, ‘Look at this beautiful *face*.’ You should say, ‘Oh, beautiful lips, beautiful eyes, beautiful lips.’ If you say, ‘My goodness, these are some, these are really, really large, or like hyper-sculpted lips,’ then that doesn’t look natural.”

But size isn’t the only way to tell that lips may be overfilled. Dr. Henry says the lips shouldn’t be so full that you can’t see some of the lines in the skin. “Sometimes lips can get so full that they’re just shining and you can’t see that natural variation in the skin because it’s like a full balloon — you can’t see any of the natural folds,” she says.

We don’t want really wrinkly lips, right? But when a lip is really overfilled, it can have an eerily smooth appearance which we don’t see in natural, unfilled, lips.



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### Think Outside The Aesthetics

A harsh duck lip isn’t the only risk you run when you overfill — it can also come with adverse health effects.

“The largest danger of overfilling the lip is that we can compromise vasculature (accidentally injecting into blood vessels and causing necrosis), a vascular occlusion,” Dr. Henry says. “We can actually block it because we put in so much filler that it compresses those vessels and could lead to compromised blood flow. That’s the worst outcome.”

A buzzy term currently taking over social media is filler migration. “Filler migration can sometimes happen because the fillers are moldable for about 14 days, sometimes longer, after the injection,” adds Dr. Lee. And while she insists that this is sometimes a good thing if something needs a little tweaking, it also means that the filler can migrate unintentionally.

“For example, if you go get a facial right after the injection, the filler will migrate to other unintended locations and settle there after 2-3 weeks,” she says. “But sometimes the migration isn’t always obvious because there is swelling after the injections are done. Remember, fillers are hydrophilic — meaning they attract water, which means you see swelling.”

### **Know How (and When) To Dissolve**

The good news is: dissolving lip filler if you’re displeased is a pretty straightforward process...but that doesn’t necessarily mean it will solve all of your problems.

“If a hyaluronic acid-based filler is used, the dissolvent is injected [in]to the area, and the filler dissolves within 24-48 hours,” Dr. Lee shares. “However, the challenges are that because we don’t know exactly where the filler is, it is usually injected in differing depths to come into contact with the filler to dissolve it.”

She explains that another challenge is that doctors can’t control how much filler is going to be dissolved, so Dr. Lee always prepares patients to expect that all of the filler might go away. “Most patients don’t realize that the dissolvent is *more* expensive than the filler though,” she further explains. “But if a non-hyaluronic acid filler is used, you’re out of luck as the dissolvent is specific for this and other options will need to be discussed.”

### **Embrace Your New Look**

In the days following your fillers, you can expect a small bit of swelling and bruising — but make no mistake, it’s nothing a little gloss (like my favorite one by [Ami Colé](#)) and ice (try this chic [cryo freeze tool](#)) can’t fix. Note, this is the reason experts suggest giving yourself a two-week grace period post-filler *before* any big event.

Additionally, I was sure to up my water intake to improve blood flow, something I’ve found incredibly helpful in speeding up the healing process. In short, don’t be alarmed if initially your pout is a little juicier than expected. Once everything settles, hopefully, you’ll be as obsessed with your results as I am.

<https://www.elle.com/beauty/makeup-skin-care/a41781085/what-to-know-before-getting-lip-fillers/>