LIFE IN PLASTIC

Jaw Filler: What to Know About the Treatment on the Rise

Consider this your complete guide, including injection options, potential risks, and pricing.

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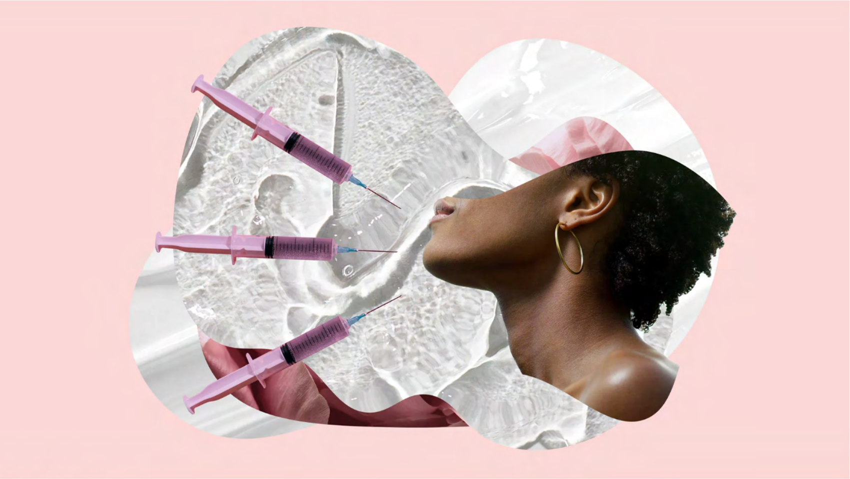

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Interest in plastic surgery is at an all-time high, but stigma and misinformation still surround the industry and the patients. Welcome to Life in Plastic, a series by Allure that aims to break down cosmetic procedures and provide all the information you'll need to make whatever decision is right for your body — no judgment, just the facts.

Jawlines are notoriously tricky to cosmetically finesse. In fact, jawlines were considered by many dermatologists and plastic surgeons to be the final frontier for noninvasive surgeries before making the jump into surgical territory. But as dermal fillers continue to become more sophisticated, along with improved techniques and tricks (looking at you, lip filler) by the doctors who inject them, the ability to enhance the jawline has evolved into subtle, all-over facial optimization and definition.

Barely two years ago, fillers were not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the chin area (which is included under the jaw umbrella), meaning that any use of dermal fillers in that area is considered off-label. Aesthetics manufacturers raced to formulate a filler specifically for the chin area, with Juvéderm Voluma XC winning FDA approval in June 2020, followed by another hyaluronic acid filler, Restylane Defyne, which earned FDA approval for chin augmentation and correction in February 2021.

Surprisingly, fillers still aren't currently FDA-approved for use in the jawline, but savvy and experienced doctors frequently use them off-label to balance the lower face. "We're getting more and better fillers for different areas here in the United States, where in Europe or Asia, they have two or five times the number of fillers we have," says Bay Area, California-based double board-certified plastic surgeon David Sieber, MD. "A lot of the fillers we have are getting new FDA approvals for various areas, which I think are going to expand how a lot of these fillers are used."

But despite the off-label use of filler in the jawline, Dr. Sieber says one thing is totally clear: the jawline is always hot. Historically, dermal fillers focused on the upper- to mid-facial region, says New York City board-certified dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank, MD, but now, he's hearing from patients that they've noticed an imbalance between a youthful, plump upper face and an untreated lower face.

"Most people don't think about their chins or jawlines, unless, of course, they're weak or there's an imbalance," he says, adding that the chin is the "anchor" of the face, therefore, altering it in any way is complicated and shouldn't be evaluated in isolation. "I'm not treating a specific feature," he says. "You need to look at the whole picture."

But before rushing to the mirror to check out your chin or booking the next available appointment with your doctor, read these insights from leading dermatologists and plastic surgeons on the benefits and limitations of jawline and chin filler.

Meet the Experts:

- Melissa Doft, MD, a double board-certified plastic surgeon and a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City.
- Paul Jarrod Frank, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and author based with a practice in New York City.

- Andrew Jacono, MD, a dual board-certification in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery and head and neck surgery, with practices in New York City and Long Island, New York.
- Adam Kolker, MD, a double board-certified plastic surgeon with a practice in New York City.
- David Sieber, MD, a double board-certified plastic surgeon in the San Francisco, California Bay Area.

What is jaw filler?

Dermal fillers are gel substances, usually with a hyaluronic acid base, that are injected into the face and different parts of the body for a number of aesthetic benefits. They can be injected into the face jawline and chin area to help alleviate an array of patient concerns, including a more 'taut' appearance in the area and enhanced definition or contour.

Most plastic surgeons and dermatologists lean toward reversible hyaluronic acid fillers like Juvéderm Voluma XC and Restylane Defyne (which, unlike some fillers, can be dissolved after injection if necessary) for the chin and jawline area because they are "predictable, adjustable, and safe," says Dr. Kolker.

What are the benefits of jaw filler?

Jaw filler can offer a wide range of benefits to an even wider range of people, as patients of all ages now want in on this aesthetics procedure.

It can balance in the lower face.

Because the jawline and chin are foundational parts of the overall facial structure, it can make a huge difference when they're adjusted. New York City-based double board-certified plastic surgeon Adam Kolker, MD, says that the jawline is usually addressed as "an aesthetic unit" when treated, meaning that the entire area is evaluated cohesively, even though some patients may only need enhancement in one specific area and not across the entire jawline. What's more, they are a major consideration for plastic surgeons when evaluating other facial features, like the eyes, nose, and lips.

"The overarching principle of jawline filler is to improve facial harmony by restoring proportion and balance with other facial features," explains Dr. Kolker, who adds that a 'deficient' jawline can appear in many different ways. "The chin may be small and retrusive, or in profile, it may not reach the line of lower lip projection. The lower jaw bone angles could also be weak."

But really, it's all about balance, says New York City board-certified facial plastic surgeon Andrew Jacono, MD. "When done appropriately, [adding] definition along the jaw creates an elegant contour as it transitions into the neck," he explains. He also notes that some patients request a more chiseled jawline versus an elongated effect. This means jaw filler could be a good option for those who have considered Kybella to treat submental fullness, which is doctor-speak for a "double chin."

They can camouflage fine lines.

Though some chins are smaller due to genetics and nature, others shrink with age, which can change the shape of the face and deepen fine lines. "Our bones change with age, and the lower face gains volume while the jawline becomes wider," explains Dr. Kolker, which can make sagging skin, or jowls, appear more prominent in the jawline and neck region.

By strategically placing filler in the chin itself, as well as in an area Dr. Kolker calls the "pre-jowl sulcus," or the dip beneath the chin where it meets the jowls, the chin will have a more pronounced projection to plump the area and minimize the appearance of superficial wrinkles, as well as smooth and rejuvenate jaw contour temporarily.

It can be used to proportion other parts of the face.

The presence or absence of a more structured chin influences the way our other facial features look, especially when viewed and appreciated as a whole, versus a collection of individual areas.

"A lot of jaw contouring or chins with fillers, and it gives you the biggest bang for your buck," says Dr. Sieber, which he admits often surprises his patients who visit him for an entirely different concern. "Chin fillers not only improve the profile, but they can also make your nose look smaller as the proportions change."

For this reason, if you're someone who is considering a rhinoplasty, jaw filler may be an unexpected and less invasive way to achieve your desired look. This highlights the importance of selecting a dermatologist or plastic surgeon who is not only well-versed in facial anatomy, but also in the nuanced relationships between various parts of the face.

It can be a test drive for more invasive surgery.

In the office of double-board certified plastic surgeon Melissa Doft, MD, many young patients opt for temporary jawline filler to test out an augmentation before diving right into surgical options, most often a chin implant.

What are the downsides to jaw filler?

By bolstering the chin and jawline, you can redefine the structural shape of the face, but there are limits to what filler can reasonably achieve, especially when gravity comes into play. "Filler in the chin or jawline can help with fine lines, but not with jowls, there's too much skin laxity," says Dr. Jacono. "And in turn, the amount of filler needed to fill the space would be too great. Plus, filler adds weight and would add to the gravitational pull."

But in most jawline cases, the most annoying aspect is the temporary nature of the filler. "As injectable fillers are viscous liquid, they can reliably achieve small-volume soft tissue enhancement," explains Dr. Kolker, adding that for permanent and "more significant" accentuation of jawline contour, "surgery is a better alternative."

Who's not a candidate for jaw filler?

Patients with an already square or defined jaw would probably not seek an enhancement, nor would they be appropriate candidates. But allergies to hyaluronic acid or other fillers aside, everyone else is theoretically a candidate.

Although this route of jawline injections works for most patients, those with exceptionally small chins won't see a 1:1 comparison between filler and an implant because filler "isn't as stiff as an implant" and can "make the chin appear too long," says Dr. Kolker, which draws out the face rather than accomplishing a taut, contoured look. Filler also can't correct an underbite or dental abnormalities.

"For individuals with more moderate or significant underdevelopment or lack of definition, the soft, viscous nature of injectable filler is rarely enough to achieve and maintain contour in the short and long term," he says, and adds that this is most commonly seen in patients seeking a sculpting effect for a slimmer or more chiseled jawline.

What should I expect at my appointment?

No treatment — especially for jawbones and chins — is a universal, one-size fits all approach, and selecting an injector with an eye towards finessing facial composition is the key to a happy patient outcome. A jawline augmentation is tailored to enhance and highlight your features, both individually and holistically, and the first step during a consultation is a full appraisal by your board certified plastic surgeon or dermatologist who can take your proportions into account.

"Anytime you're building volume with filler or fat, you want to consider the patient's proportions so that angles are not overly sharp, especially the gonial angle on women," explains Dr. Jacono. (He means the back angle of your jaw at the bottom of your ear.)

Jawline injections are a relatively pain-free procedure, although patients may feel a bit of pressure as the filler is injected, and are typically done within 30 minutes. Drops of filler may also be added to neighboring areas to blend the contour and establish a smooth transition between areas.

Dr. Doft agrees that the jawline holds enormous power to redefine the structural shape of the face, and adheres to a less is more technique, placing "small amounts along the jawbone to highlight a defined jaw" instead of using large volumes of filler.

What are the risks of jaw filler?

The side effects and risks of facial filler are consistent regardless of area, says Dr. Doft. "The most common side effect is bruising, but you can also, very rarely, see skin necrosis, due to injecting the filler into a vessel."

What is aftercare like?

Jaw filler requires almost no downtime. For the best filler results, the same golden rules of other fillers apply here: skip cocktail hour and the gym for 24 hours after the procedure to minimize bruising. Take arnica tablets before and after your appointment to reduce potential swelling, and use a cold ice pack throughout the day post-treatment to alleviate any bruising.

How long do results last?

As the body begins to metabolize the filler as soon as it is injected, Dr. Kolker estimates a 12-month lifespan, generally. But "depending on the product, volume used, and degree of correction," a shorter six to nine months, or longer 18 to 24 months could be possible.

How much does jaw filler cost?

There's no hard and fast rule for the cost of jawline filler due to the higher level of variation compared to other areas on the face. The usual suspects — surgeon demand and expertise, geographic location, as well as the type and amount of filler used — are still at play, but because patients pay per syringe, which varies from person to person, the price range is expansive. Dr. Doft estimates that an appointment for jawline filler will start around $700, depending upon the above collection of factors.

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