

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

DERMAL FILLER (HYALURONIC ACID)

Dermal fillers are sterile gels that consist of stabilised hyaluronic acid (HA). Dermal fillers are injected into the deeper layers of tissue to create volume as well as into more superficial layers of skin to correct lines, wrinkles and folds and restore elasticity. Dermal fillers are often used to sculpt lips, volumise cheeks and contour the face.

The effects of dermal fillers can last 6—12 months, but this period may vary from person to person and depends on the area treated and the volume injected. Follow-up treatment may be necessary to create and maintain the desired effect.

There are risks involved when injecting areas with underlying sensitive structures such as nerves and blood vessels or when treating wrinkles around the eye area.

Temporary side effects related to injections can occur and may include swelling, redness and tenderness. There have also been isolated reports of small lumps developing at the treatment sites, if injection into the skin or tissues of the face is too superficial, and these bumps may persist for several months.

Inflammatory reactions have been reported in rare cases and they manifest with redness, swelling and induration at the injection site, which can at times affect surrounding tissue. Reactions of this type can arise either a few days, weeks or months after injection. These reactions are generally mild to moderate and self-limiting with an average duration of two weeks. In rare cases, reactions have been recurrent and have lasted for several months and may require medical assessment and treatment including dissolving the HA filler with hyaluronidase injections.

Viral diseases, such as Herpes Simplex virus (cold sores) may be triggered by injections in those that are susceptible.

In very rare cases, dermal fillers have impaired circulation to the tissues and resulted in skin necrosis or tissue death. This first appears as a pale or blanched area of skin which then becomes greyish and mottled. Swelling and pain occurs which is followed by blistering and wound breakdown. Permanent scarring may occur if the impaired circulation is not identified and dissolved promptly.

Stroke and blindness have also been reported in the literature and are the rarest of complications. These events have occurred when a tiny particle of dermal filler has been accidentally injected into an artery, has travelled through the circulatory system and become lodged in a vessel in the brain or behind the eye. Current statistics according to the literature identify 53 cases of blindness due to hyaluronic acid dermal fillers (Chatrath, et al. 2019).

Most dermal fillers contain a local anaesthetic agent similar to the numbing agents used by dentists. The numbness caused may result in diminished sensation to pain and temperature in the treated area for approximately two hours post treatment. Individuals with a known allergy to this product or similar agents must not receive treatments containing these ingredients.

Chatrath, V., Banerjee, P., Goodman, G., & Rahman, E. (2019). Soft-tissue Filler-associated Blindness: A Systematic Review of Case Reports and Case Series. *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery - Global Open*, 7(4). doi: 10.1097/gox.0000000000002173