



Before Lip Filler



After Lip Filler

IN SEARCH OF NATURAL LOOKING RESULTS

TEXT BY PHILLIP R. LANGSDON, MD, FACS

The thought of having a cosmetic procedure can be a little daunting in view of what we see some Hollywood celebrities doing to themselves. Even here at home, most of us know someone who has had Botox, dermal fillers, a nose job, eyelid surgery or a facelift, who might not look exactly as they had hoped. You know what I'm talking about; those frozen eyebrows, blown-up faces, rounded eyes, a mouth that won't move properly, that "Spock" eyebrow look...

The truth is, no one has to look overdone or distorted. While there can be unexpected risks from any treatment, most abnormal results happen for a reason. Perhaps the provider isn't very experienced or not trained to offer all options. In some instances the person might be getting filler when they really need surgery, or vice versa. Sometimes too much product is injected. Sometimes the doctor overdoes the surgery or uses less-than-ideal techniques.

So, how does someone figure out how to achieve natural-looking results? Here are some things to consider.

Find the right provider and facility. Make sure the doctor or provider specializes. In Tennessee, almost anyone can give an injection and any doctor can perform any kind of surgery, even if they haven't received formal medical training in the procedure (in a residency or fellowship overseen by a university, national organization peer review program, or the ACGME [Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education]). That's right, any MD could perform a facelift if they could obtain privileges to carry out the procedure in a hospital. Although

it is unlikely a doctor who is not properly trained could obtain credentials to perform a facelift in a Tennessee hospital, they can still do it in their own office because they are self-regulating. So, research the type of medical training the provider received such as board certification or fellowship training; make sure they state by which board they are certified. I'm not talking about a weekend course certificate or some manufacturer company certificate in my opinion these mean nothing. Also keep in mind that anyone can post anything they want on their own website—they are not regulated. Sites such as the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (www.abfprs.org), the American Board of Plastic Surgery (www.plasticsurgery.org), the American Board of Dermatology (www.abderm.org) or the American Society of Oculoplastic Surgery (www.asoprs.org) may be good sources of information. The State of Tennessee Department of Health website also lists physicians' actual specialties.

In some states nurses must be supervised by a doctor in order to provide Botox, facial filler or laser treatments. It might be good to make sure that the overseeing doctor is actually present in the facility, and it is also reassuring when the overseeing doctor is trained in facial plastic surgery, plastic surgery, dermatology or oculoplastic surgery.

If I were to have surgery I'd prefer a state-licensed surgery center or hospital (they are listed on the Tennessee Department of Health website). Although we are seeing Botox, fillers and laser treatments done in hair salons, I personally prefer to have injections in a clinical setting.

Ask to see before-and-after photos of the provider's actual patients as this will allow you to get some idea of what kind of results to expect. Go into the consultation with realistic expectations; there are no miracles out there. Be sure you have the opportunity to ask questions, find out the risks and benefits.

One last thing: the Internet is a good way to learn about treatments, but remember, the Internet is unregulated and anyone can appear to be an expert by providing a lot of verbiage or listing organizations or diplomas that are not mainstream medicine. Consumers are easily fooled. Beware of Internet photos—photographic exposure techniques are sometimes deceiving.

Aesthetic treatments can be both satisfying and natural. We are blessed to have them available. For optimal results do your homework, check credentials, see results and talk to other patients. ■

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