

Myth 1

Fillers are foreign materials that are unsafe.

There are different fillers available in the market and most new fillers are totally compatible with human and are safe. Early fillers were derived from animal collagen and posed a danger of allergic reaction to humans so it was mandatory to do a skin test before actually putting in the fillers. The old fillers also lasted only three months. New improved fillers are made of materials that have no immunogenicity so that allergy does not occur and skin test is not necessary. The most popular fillers nowadays are made of hyaluronic acid (a substance naturally found in our skin) and are made to last between six to nine months. Addition of stronger bonds and dextrose beads make some fillers last 12-18 months. Our body possesses an enzyme that breaks down hyaluronic acid so these fillers are only temporary thus adding to its safety. Most temporary fillers are made of materials that our body can break down and get rid of.

Myth 2

Fillers are longer lasting than Botox so it is a better choice.

Fillers and Botox can work hand in hand with synergy but is not replaceable for each other. Botox treats dynamic wrinkles (movement lines) and reshapes jaw through relaxing muscle movement and bulk. Fillers as the name implies, fill up skin grooves (static wrinkles) and can be used to reshape the face when it is used

like an implant (when injected deep into the facial tissue). Things that fillers can do that Botox cannot include enhancing nose bridge, chin, cheeks and lips.

Myth 3

The longer the fillers last, the better.

Temporary fillers usually last shorter than 2 years as they are completely biodegraded in our bodies. Longer lasting fillers available are made from partially degradable and non-degradable materials. There is always a trade off between safety and how long the fillers last. The companies making these permanent fillers have done their due diligence to ensure safety in their products because the filler lasts indefinitely, we can never know its future implications. There are conflicting reports regarding complications in these fillers. Practically speaking, permanent fillers allow no mistake during its use as any such mistake stays permanently (unless surgically removed). The advantage is obvious if the filler is used perfectly; there is no need to redo the procedure.

Myth 4

Fillers may migrate to other parts of the body.

Good fillers are made to be "sticky", that is, it sticks to the tissue where we put it. Poorly manufactured fillers or illegal fillers (like liquid silicon) can migrate away from the original position and end up as ugly lumps and bulges looking disastrous.

Myth 5

Fillers end up looking lumpy and unnatural.

Again good fillers gel well and blend in with the surrounding tissues to achieve a natural and even look. The outcome is also largely dependent on the experience and injection techniques of the doctors. The bad reputation of lumpiness comes from the wrong choice of fillers and poor technique. One notable side effect from bad fillers is the formation of granulomas (inflamed nodules) that occurs when the body tries to break down a non degradable substance (e.g. liquid silicon).

Myth 6

Injecting filler is easy and can be done by anybody.

Injecting fillers are not to be taken lightly as it is considered as an implant procedure. It is important to look for reputable doctors using reputable brands of fillers to minimise unwanted side effects. It is actually illegal for non medically licensed practitioner to inject fillers. Non aseptic technique can also cause deep infection and abscess formation.

Myth 7

Injecting filler is a painful procedure.

Injecting fillers can be painful but the pain can be alleviated by using numbing cream, applying ice to target area and injecting local anaesthetic. In properly trained hands, filler injection is only minimally uncomfortable.

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Fillers myth busters

Know what's true from what's not about fillers

By Dr Ivan Tan Khee Hon

