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**Fillers:**

It is no secret that as we age we change in appearance, what was once young and youthful elastic skin will change into spotty, dull, and sagging skin over time. Aging is a process we will all go through inevitably with some people loving the idea of an aging body. With every crow's foot it tells the story of how much you've smiled throughout your life or with every sun spot it shows how much you loved being outdoors or at the beach. For others, aging is just something they try to fight against the grain of, either with different creams and lotions that guarantee the rejuvenation of your once youthful appearance or by changing their diets and over supplementing with vitamins. But as we get older, technology gets “younger” and it constantly advances to where certain issues we've had in the past now have solutions. So with the issue of aging now comes the solution which is; fillers.

To define fillers it is the mixture of different substances such as “Calcium Hydroxylapatite, Poly-L-lactic Acid, and Hyaluronic Acid”; it is a combination of synthetic and natural materials, or at least the legal fillers are. New York, California and Florida are hot spots for getting appearance alterations. I wanted to find the purpose/treatment of fillers based on companies and they all describe the purpose of fillers in different ways. “Filler plumps, balances and defines lips. It can also smooth fine lines and wrinkles around the mouth, enhance cheekbones, brighten under-eyes and contour chins & jawlines” (Alchemy 43). “People are clearly more conscious of their appearance in these days of social media and “selfies.” While people are increasingly interested in doing things to improve their appearance, many remain reluctant to have surgery. Injectable treatments performed by New York plastic surgeon Dr. David Rapaport uniformly

involves little to no downtime, with patients commonly coming in before work, during a lunch break, or after work to get their Botox and/or fillers” (Rapaport). Finally, “At Skinly Aesthetics our one and only goal is to ensure you get the latest and most advanced skin and body treatments to keep you attractive and naturally beautiful. Whether it is a few fine lines, moderate facial volume loss or fullness around your waist we will provide you with the best solutions at the most competitive rates in the safest environment” (Skinly Aesthetics). If I pretended to have no knowledge about fillers and had to base my opinion solely on the quotes given above, I would perceive fillers to be a procedure that is quick compared to extensive surgery and it is used to not change but enhance your looks it can be used to reverse signs of aging on the face but also be used to enhance areas in the lips, cheekbones, chin etc and thanks to social media people have become more aware of their appearances/flaws and think of fillers a quick fix. Fillers have been created pretty recently, it all started in 1970.

The first two fillers that were introduced were dermal fillers called Zyderm and Zyplast, it was made out of animal collagens (specifically beef) and before being introduced to the human body the fillers would require an allergy test. Animal collagen was foreign to our bodies but the fillers only caused swelling to the areas injected and did not have long last results so later on Bellafill was created it was a similar to Zyderm and Zyplast but was more advanced and it was used for acne scars and nasolabial folds. In 2004 Sculptra was created, it was made with PolyL-lactic Acid which is a dissolvable suture and later on in 2010 the Hyaluronic Acid filler was created. Hyaluronic acid is a substance that is already found naturally in our bodies and had long lasting results so it instantly became popularized. Today fillers are usually a combined mixture of natural and synthetic materials. Some celebrities that used fillers range from women like Courtney Cox, Gwen Stefani, Lil Kim and men like Simon Cowell, Vladimir Putin, and Zac

Efron (Riedlinger 2022). One celebrity popularized one type of filler for the lips, their name was Kylie Jenner. Kylie Jenner was born with thin lips/small lips and in 2015 the internet noticed the drastic change in her lips. She went on to deny having fillers originally saying that it was because of the way she “overlined her lips”. Around this same time a challenge called the “Kylie Jenner Lip Challenge” arised where people would use a shot glass as a suction cup on their lips and leave it on for about 5 minutes and when removed you are left with huge and swollen lips. Once Kylie admitted she had lip fillers Google searches increased, “Google searches for "lip fillers" increase by 11,300 percent in 24 hours. Within a year they are among the top-five, most-requested, nonsurgical, cosmetic treatments” (Stables 2021).

Fillers were once perceived as a treatment only available to celebrities but today your next door neighbor or mailman could have fillers; it is not as exclusive as it was once perceived. Usually prices range from \$500 and up depending on what area you would like to work on, for some the price point might be too high so they are willingly able to travel out of the country or go to an unlicensed practitioner to get work done which is highly dangerous. In today’s world a lot of people prefer fillers rather than getting surgery, the recovery time is much faster and for those who are afraid of getting “cut open” for surgery with fillers it's only simple injections. The rise of fillers can also be caused by social media by the use of “filters”. Filters are used to enhance physical features in photos and videos. Some of them can slim the face down, enlarge the eyes, make the nose small, make cheekbones higher, give you bigger ‘pouty’ lips with smooth skin. Filters are temporary but when you also see yourself in photos with some type of enhancement with the filters you would like to look like that all the time; so they opt for fillers. Overall fillers have made an impact in the beauty industry and will be here to stay and continue to improve.

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