



READ MY LIPS

BY VALERIE KELLEY

As far as beauty trends go, plump pouts are here to stay. That's not to say that thin lips aren't beautiful. Think Meryl Streep or Jodie Foster. However, every time you turn around, some model or actress is showing off her newly "enhanced" kisser. And why shouldn't they? Soft, full lips just seem youthful and healthy, sensuous and sexy.

Here's the truth: As we get older, collagen and elastin, which give lips their fullness, collapse over time, not only deflating the shape, but increasing lines and wrinkles. Once these lines become etched into the skin, there's even less definition, less fullness. Thankfully, there are plenty of ways to renew those youthful puckers that Father Time has taken away.

For a fast temporary fix, try any number of lip-plumping products found on

the beauty aisle. Typically, these products swell the lips with cinnamon, peppermint or capsaicin, increasing blood flow to the lips, giving them a plump appearance. While this may work to increase the volume and softness of your lips, the result is short-lived. Most of the effects will wear off in about an hour.

Permanent makeup, or tattooing, is a tactic used to outline and color the lips, giving the illusion of fuller lips — much like expertly applied lip liner. Again, this is a temporary fix and it does fade over time.

Of course, if you're looking for something longer lasting, than it's time to consider fillers. To recreate a youthful, heart-shaped outline, Botox, used off-label, can be injected along the edges of the upper and lower lip line, temporarily relaxing the muscles that can cause wrinkling. The procedure requires no anesthesia and takes mere minutes. Patients report fuller lips for up to 4 months.

To further enhance the contours of a thin, wrinkled lip line, your dermatologist or med spa professional may also suggest a hyaluronic acid filler like Restylane® or Juvederm® for increased volume. The results are visible immediately. Fullness can last up to a year, depending on which product is used.

"It is extremely important for patients to find a qualified, injection artist with considerable experience in the procedure. Poorly done lip enhancements rightly earn the infamous name "trout-pout," says Dana Martinez, owner of Lecada Medical Artistry. Which is why Martinez encourages a "less-is-more" approach. "Most skilled injection artists are conservative with the amount of filler used in the first injection. The results should look good, but not disproportionate, so a second injection is typically needed to achieve the best, most natural outcome."

Martinez also remarked that many men and women are under the wrong impression that once the use of hyaluronic or collagen-based injectables ends, his or her lips will deflate or sag as the filler wears off. "This is, simply, not true," she says. "As fillers gradually disappear, lip volume returns to its original size, but no less full than it began."

Contact Lecada Medical Artistry at 813-874-2332 for a complimentary consultation on safe, non-surgical ways to bring back the full, luscious lips of your youth. Lecada is located at 3710 West Azele Street in Tampa, FL 33609.