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**Facial Fat Augmentation**

**What are fat injections or fat transfers?** The terms fat injection and fat transfer refer to the process of taking fat from your stomach area or outer thigh and injecting it into your facial area. The goal of the procedure is to add fullness to the face. This helps patients who need volume restored in the overall face, cheek support for the eyelid, or youthful restoration of facial fullness. Facial Fat Injections give some lifting to the general facial structure.

**Who can benefit from fat injection or fat transfers to the face?**

Fat injection in the face can help patients who need restoration of facial structure, or patients who desire restoration of youthful volume. As you age, the dermis under your skin thins out. This can leave the face looking too thin and has the effect of making the skin look like it sags. This happens to women of all body types: small frame, medium frame, large frame. A fat injection adds fat to the area beneath the skin, and has the effect of 'filling out the face' to a more youthful state. In addition to filling out wrinkles in the face, highly purified fat injections also enhance the blood circulation in the tissues. This is because there are a small number of stem cells that are collected and concentrated during the fat processing. Thus, a small number of stem cells are reinjected into your face! [Stem cells and the fountain of youth](http://www.cosmeticsurg.net/blog/2009/03/30/fat-grafts-stem-cells-and-the-fountain-of-youth/) is an exciting new field of facial plastic surgery.

**What areas of the face benefit from fat injections?**

Fat injections are commonly used to rejuvenate the temples, cheeks, eyebrow, eyes, lips, melolabial folds, jowls, and chin. Fat can also be used to camouflage bags under the eyes.Patients may be familiar with the use of fat injections for [lip augmentation](http://www.cosmeticsurg.net/procedures/Lip-augmentation.php), but there are many other uses in the face. For example, fat injections can also be used to lessen the lines around the mouth, [fill in bags under the eyes](http://www.cosmeticsurg.net/blog/index.php?post_id=134), fill out the cheeks and chin (areas which might have otherwise used facial implants), or as an all purpose filler in the face. As we continue to understand the aging process better, we have come to appreciate that in some patients, rather than stretching tissues, adding soft tissue volume (such as fat) will make the face look younger.

**Do fat injections last?**

Some patients think that fat injections "do not last". However, this is not the case. When properly done, a large percentage of the [injected fat cells do indeed survive and are permanent.](http://www.cosmeticsurg.net/blog/2006/12/12/how-long-do-fat-grafts-last) Since some fat cells are lost, the effect of the fat transfer is not as dramatic after a few weeks. For this reason, we tend to 'overcorrect,' or inject more than we need to, knowing that after a few weeks the final result will be more to the patient's liking. If we inject less, the patient may be happy with the initial result, but be disappointed over time as the results 'disappear'.

**How are fat injections different from injectible fillers like restylane?**

Compared to injectable [facial fillers](http://www.cosmeticsurg.net/procedures/Facial-fillers.php) such as Restylane, fat transfers are more of an involved procedure because the fat has to be harvested from another part of the body using a sterile technique. However, unlike injectable fillers, fat transfers can be used in larger volumes to fill larger defects. More than 30ml of your own fat can be used during one session.

**What is involved in the fat injection procedure for the facial area?**

Fat injections can be done under sedation or general anesthesia. Using small syringes, fat is harvested from the hip, outer thigh, or lower abdomen. The fat is then processed using a special centrifuge, and is then injected into the desired area. When performed properly, a large percentage of the fat transfer will stay and the face will fill out to look more youthful.

**How much do fat injections cost?**

The physician's fee for fat injections to the face ranges from $1500 to $4000, depending on the area(s) to be injected. If the procedure is done in conjunction with another facial procedure, a professional discount is usually applied. There are also decreased costs for patients who need more than one session of facial fat augmentation to accomplish their goals.

**Is a Facial Fat Injection Right for Me?**

Your surgeon will carefully discuss options for facial rejuvenation with you during your consultation in order to determine if facial fat augmentation is right for you. Other options to accomplish your goals will also be discussed, and all of your questions will be addressed.

**What are the risks?**

*Risks are very important to discuss with your surgeon for any procedure or surgery.* The benefit of any intervention or procedure that is recommended for you should always outweigh potential risks. Risks with any procedure (no matter how “big” or “small”) include bleeding, infection, or the need for future procedures. There is the possibility that you will heal in a way that is different from how you imagined. If you gain or lose a large amount of weight, the fat used to restore the face will be affected in a similar way as other fat in your body. Patients who have large fluctuations in weight are not good candidates for facial fat augmentation.