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How to Decide if You Need a Lip Flip or Lip Filler

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Lip flips have spiked in popularity recently, but the trendy treatment may not be the best option for everyone. “Whether a lip flip, lip filler or both should be done for a patient depends on their anatomy and aesthetic goals,” explains Palo Alto, CA facial plastic surgeon Sachin Parikh, MD.

One of the reasons people have begun requesting lip flips more frequently is a fear of looking overdone. “Some patients are hesitant to get filler because they associate it with the dramatic augmentations that were popular ten years ago. They don’t know it can be done subtly,” says Palo Alto, CA facial plastic surgeon David M. Lieberman, MD. “They might ask for a lip flip, thinking it’s a substitute for filler.” However, the differences between the two options are more nuanced than that, and experienced doctors can “deliver a very natural-looking, beautiful result with filler,” assured Dr. Lieberman.

While the choice is ultimately yours, talking with an expert can ensure you make the best decision. “Everyone should go to a trusted provider who will be honest about what’s possible for them, within the scope of their anatomy and their boundaries of budget and comfort,” says Dr. Lieberman. “It’s important to deliver all the information and set realistic expectations for any aesthetic procedure.” To educate yourself on which option might be best for you, we gathered insight from top doctors that perform the procedure.

For more volume: lip filler

Dr. Lieberman says his practice always suggests lip filler over a lip flip when a patient’s main goal is greater volume. “A lip flip can make the lips look larger and slightly fuller. However, it’s due to more vertical exposure of lip structure, not forward projection or actual plumpness,” he explains.

For more surface area: lip flip

Delray Beach, FL facial plastic surgeon Miguel Mascaró, MD says a lip flip is great for patients whose lips are flat or “inside their mouth.” These patients need more surface area. “The flip simply turns more of the colored lip area upward and outward,” explains Dr. Lieberman.

If you have thin lips: lip flip + lip filler

“Some patients have a thin upper lip or lips that almost disappear when they smile. Placing filler within the lip border would result in plumper, but still ‘small’ lips, with outward projection but very little vertical uplift,” explains Dr. Parikh. In these cases, he advocates for a combination of a lip flip and lip filler. This creates “more of a lip shape that can then be plumped with filler if that’s the desired effect.”

Dr. Lieberman says some patients look their best with a combination, but it’s all about balance. Experts need to examine the “proportion of the lip in order to bring the right balance to the face in such a way that many people wouldn’t even be able to tell treatments were done,” he says.

When considering a combination, Beverly Hills, CA facial plastic surgeon **Kimberly J. Lee, MD** says it’s common for people to get filler in the lower lip and a lip flip in the upper lip. She adds that sometimes patients add on a lip flip a few months after fillers to help extend the longevity.

Dr. Mascaró says a combination is a great option for older patients. “As we get older, the lip lengthens and the lip needs to be flipped out in order to get the surface area to gain volume,” he explains.

For longer-lasting results: lip filler

Instead of filler, a lip flip uses a neurotoxin, like Dysport or Botox Cosmetic. “It’s two tiny injections of about four units in total, right above the lip, to relax the muscles that hold the lip down over the teeth,” explains Dr. Parikh. Although lip flips have beautiful results, they tend to wear off quickly, in as little as four to six weeks, he says. For longer-lasting volume, lip filler is your best bet.

If you have a long upper lip: surgical lip flip

Some patients with a long upper lip (the area between the nose and mouth) would get the best results from a surgical lip flip, says Dr. Lieberman. He adds that if you go to a trusted provider, they'll be honest about whether this is what's required for your desired look.

For more drastic results: lip filler

While a lip flip can help lips appear slightly fuller, there are limitations as a lip will only flip so much, says Dr. Lee. "For more drastic results, fillers are still the way to go!"

If you already have some tooth showing or have lip lines: lip filler

Dr. Mascaró says, "Those who already have some tooth show when slightly opening their mouth or have lines in their lips (like a deflated balloon)" would benefit more from lip filler. "You can get definition and slight volume from adequately placed filler in these patients."

If you have a nice lip shape: lip filler

When a patient already has a "nice lip shape with some lip height to accommodate filler," lip filler is likely their best option, says Dr. Lieberman. Boosting the volume without altering the amount of lip showing is a great approach for these candidates.

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