

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media Contact: Ione Echeverria
214-648-3404
ione.echeverria@utsouthwestern.edu

NEW IMPLANT PRODUCT USED BY PLASTIC SURGEONS AT UT SOUTHWESTERN FILLS OUT THIN LIPS AND FACIAL CREASES

DALLAS – March 13, 2002 – Until now, the only option for women who wanted to plump up thin lips was either lip-liner makeup or collagen injections that work only temporarily. But a new synthetic material used by plastic surgeons at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas offers a permanent alternative that creates fuller, more defined lips.

“During the past 10 years, the trend in facial aesthetics has centered on restoring facial balance,” said Dr. William P. Adams Jr., assistant professor of plastic surgery at UT Southwestern. “Full lips are associated with a youthful and attractive look. Both younger and older people seek fuller lips based on an ‘ideal look’ portrayed by models and actresses on magazine covers and on movie screens.”

One of Adams’ patients, Michelle Roberts, 33, president of a residential-leasing office, recently decided to undergo a lip-augmentation procedure.

“I am pleased with my new appearance,” Roberts said. “My lips look and feel natural. And I like that they are not so pouty, so it’s not the first thing people notice about me.”

Adams said popular filler materials, such as collagen and synthetic skin, provide short-term results and require periodic injections because the substances are readily absorbed by the body. Fat injections, he said, also increase lip fullness, but may cause a lumpy, unpredictable effect.

The concept of lip implants is similar to that of breast implants. Instead of a saline implant, the lip is augmented with a recently developed 4.8-millimeter-by-11-centimeter hollow tube made of expanded polytetrafluoroethylene, a soft, synthetic material that has been used for the past 30 years to replace blood vessels, to repair hernias and to treat periodontal disease and bone defects.

Lip augmentation is done as an outpatient procedure. Adams used a local anesthetic

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to completely numb Roberts' lips, then made two 3-millimeter cuts at the corners of her mouth and painlessly inserted the tube. The incisions cause imperceptible scarring and lips stay swollen and bruised for a couple of days, Adams said.

“I advise patients not to stretch their lips by laughing or talking too much until the stitches are removed,” Adams said.

Adams said a person can feel the implant for a period of time – anywhere from three to four months – but the sensation goes away once soft-tissue incorporates around it.

The outpatient procedure costs from \$2,500 to \$3,500 and should be performed by a physician who has adequate experience with the product.

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