

Dermal Fillers.

lips are just the beginning.

Melanie Petro, MD · Facial Plastic Surgeon



*You want to look better. You
don't want to look weird.*

The Spock brow. The duck-beak lip. The puffer-fish cheek. The fear is not looking older - it's looking like the treatment arrived before you did.

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01 / The fear Say the quiet part

Will filler make me look weird?

That is a fair question.
it deserves more than “don’t worry.”

You may want a small change and still be afraid of losing something familiar: your smile, your proportions, the way your mouth moves when you speak.

Natural-looking is a goal we have to define together. What bothers you? What do you like? What would feel like too much? A photograph of someone else cannot answer those questions for your face.

If you have already had filler you don’t like, you deserve a careful look and an honest conversation. You do not need to be embarrassed to say it.

A useful distinction

The fear is about being judged. The consultation should be a place where you can speak freely.

02 / The movement Dr. Petro’s starting point

Your face lives in motion.

*“Animation is **EVERYTHING.**” - Melanie Petro, MD*



At rest and in motion. A still photograph is only part of the assessment.

I learn so much about a face by watching how it moves. Which side pulls more. Where a little smirk appears. Which lines belong to an expression I want to preserve.

Filler changes volume and contour. It does not work like a neuromodulator. But that volume still has to belong to a face that smiles, laughs and talks.

Look at the cheek when you smile: its shape changes. Research on facial anatomy has measured this change and explored why a face can look overfilled in animation. A still photograph is only part of the assessment. [\[1\]](#)

*The little smirk may be
the thing we **keep**.*

When you talk

The whole mouth.

Lip movement, tooth show, the corners of the mouth, and the face around them.

When you smile

The changing cheek.

The shape at rest and the shape in expression belong in the same conversation.

Before any plan

What stays yours?

A feature you love is something to protect, not automatically something to correct.

At rest: notice the outline of the cheeks and lips.

A smile: notice how the cheeks lift and the mouth changes shape.

03 / Duck lips Lip filler & proportion

What actually causes duck lips?

The worry is usually projection: lips that seem to arrive before the rest of the face.



The vivid pink LIPS editorial cover, featuring a stylized duck with exaggerated pink lips.

“Duck lips” is a description, not a diagnosis. Too much volume for the lip’s shape, where that volume sits, and how the lip moves can all matter. The upper lip’s relationship to the lower lip and the surrounding face matters, too.

A shelf above the lip is a reason to examine the area. It is not enough, by itself, to decide that filler has migrated. [More on migration below.](#)

It is the whole mouth.

Someone asking for lip filler may really be missing definition, a little visible pink, or the way lipstick used to sit. Making the lips larger is not automatically the answer to every one of those concerns.

*More is a quantity.
better is a judgment.*

Because **I love animals** more than the internet loves memes.

Let's be clear:

Ducks are beautiful.

Foxes are beautiful.

Cats are beautiful.

And none of them volunteered to be symbols for poorly placed filler.

Dragging ducks for the sins of bad technique is lazy, cruel, and deeply unimaginative.

The problem was never the animal.

The problem was the joke - recycled, overused, and pointed at faces that deserved better.

I believe in restoration, not ridicule.

In structure, not shame.

In doing subtle work on humans - without throwing innocent creatures under the bus for a laugh.

So no, I don't do "duck lips."

I don't do "fox eye."

I don't do animal-based insults pretending to be education.

I work on people. With precision, care, and deep respect for both anatomy and identity.

If you're scared of looking unnatural, overdone, or like a caricature of yourself - you're in the right place.

But let's leave the animals out of it.

They've done nothing wrong

04 / Pillow face When fullness becomes the concern

Why does filler sometimes make a face look puffy?

“Pillow face” describes a look. it does not tell us what caused it.



Hand-drawn editorial caricature of Dr. Melanie Petro with dramatically exaggerated glossy cheeks on a hot-pink watercolor background.

Why the smile matters

The cheek changes shape when you smile. Added volume that looks balanced at rest can appear too prominent in expression. Facial tissues move within anatomical boundaries; filling around those boundaries can change how a contour looks when the face moves. That is one reason to assess both the resting and smiling face. [\[1\]](#)

01

Too much for that face.

Added volume can overwhelm the contours someone wanted to preserve. The amount needs to make sense for the existing anatomy, including previous treatment.

02

The wrong job for filler.

Let me explain it to you.

03

A tissue response.

Swelling can occur soon after treatment or appear later with inflammation. A puffy appearance does not prove overfilling. The timing and an examination help distinguish the possibilities. [\[2\]](#)

Before another syringe

*When More Filler Is
Not the Fix.*

Sometimes the most thoughtful plan is to stop, reassess and let the face be a face.

05 / Migration Find the cause before choosing the fix

Is it migration? or something else?

Migration

Filler material has moved away from the injection site. It is a recognized complication.

[\[2\]](#)

Experience, careful assessment and precise placement can help reduce the risk of migration.

[\[4\]](#)

Placement or excess volume

The contour may reflect where filler was placed or how much is there, without proving it traveled.

Swelling or a lump

These need assessment on their own terms; neither is automatically migration.

[\[2\]](#)

Bring the history

The product name, treatment dates, previous photographs, and any dissolving history help make the next conversation more useful. “It was filler” leaves a lot unanswered.

Can't you just dissolve it?

Hyaluronidase can reduce hyaluronic acid filler, but that does not make every filler treatment a completely reversible decision. A small randomized trial showed a response in HA deposits; it did not establish a guaranteed reset for a treated face. [\[3\]](#)

Non-HA and permanent fillers are different. Removal can be difficult and has risks of its own. [\[2\]](#) First establish what was used and what needs treating. Dissolving is a treatment decision, not a reflex.

06 / The whole face **Location is only the beginning**

What are we trying to change?

Dermal fillers can add volume or change contour. the useful question is whether that is what your concern needs.

What is being added?

I will always tell you my filler choice and why.

Lips & the mouth

Size, shape, definition and movement are separate questions. I will explain the options so that you can make an educated decision.

[Read about lip filler >](#)

Cheeks & facial folds

I will look at your face as a whole - at rest, smiling and talking.

[Read about fullness >](#)

Chin & profile

A change to one contour affects how the rest of the face is seen. A profile needs to belong to the front view, too.

[Start with an assessment >](#)

Under-eye concerns

Hollows, puffiness and dark shadows can look similar in a photograph. They deserve an examination before choosing a treatment.

Discuss the cause first >

A region on this page is a topic for assessment, not a recommendation to inject it. FDA approval depends on the exact product and use. [Check product-specific information.](#)

07 / Your plan A consultation with Dr. Petro

An opinion before a syringe.

Tell me what you see.

tell me what you are afraid of.

let me watch your face move.

Then we can talk about what I think will help, what I would leave alone, and why. You can come for the conversation without deciding to have treatment.

- Look at the whole face. Your concerns, history, proportions and expressions.
- Explain the choice. What filler would change, the product proposed, alternatives, limits, cost and risks.
- Leave room to reassess. Agree on follow-up and what to do if something does not look or feel right.

08 / Your questions Before you decide

The things you want to ask.

Will people be able to tell I had filler?

No one can promise what other people will notice. We can be specific about the change you want and what would feel like too much. Your expressions belong in that discussion.

How much filler do I need?

A syringe count is not a starting point. First decide whether added volume is appropriate, where a change would help, and what previous treatment may already be contributing.

How long does filler last?

Duration varies with the material and treatment area. [\[2\]](#) Ask about the exact product in your plan. A maintenance date should prompt reassessment, not an automatic repeat treatment.

How much do dermal fillers cost in Vestavia Hills?

Your quote needs to identify the proposed product, treatment and follow-up. This guide does not list a current practice price. Ask for the full cost before deciding, including whether any planned review or adjustment is included.

Should I get filler or Botox?

They do different jobs. A neuromodulator changes selected muscle activity; filler changes volume and contour. Which, if either, belongs in your plan depends on what is causing the concern.

What if I already have filler I don't like?

Bring the information you have about it. Start with an examination and a discussion of what changed. [Read about migration and dissolving](#) before assuming that more filler - or immediate dissolving - is the answer.

When might filler be the wrong choice?

When added volume does not address the concern, when previous treatment needs assessing first, or when the proposed change would take you further from the face you want. Your medical history also belongs in the decision. Choosing no treatment is a valid outcome.

Petro Facial Plastic Surgery · Vestavia Hills

You don't have to know the answer before you come.

Start with what you see. we can talk about the rest.

Let's Make A Plan >

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PETRO / THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDES

From Dr. Petro's notebook & the clinical literature

Her perspective

The movement philosophy comes from Dr. Petro's writing and her direction for this guide.

Practice identity and credentials: [Petro Facial Plastic Surgery](#) . Location: [practice contact details](#)

- [Cotofana et al. Anatomy Behind the Facial Overfilled Syndrome. 2020.](#) An anatomical study of facial change with smiling; supports dynamic assessment, without guaranteeing outcomes.
- [FDA: Dermal Fillers \(Soft Tissue Fillers\).](#) Risks, limitations, migration and removal.
- [Alam et al. Hyaluronidase for HA filler nodules: randomized trial. 2018.](#) Small deposits studied in arms; not a guarantee of complete facial reversal.
- [Treatment of Soft Tissue Filler Complications: Expert Consensus Recommendations.](#) Assessment and appropriate technique for limiting complications.

PETRO / THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDES

Keep exploring.

- [The size and shape of your lips >](#)
- [Smile lines and nasolabial folds >](#)
- [When your face looks deflated >](#)
- [Read the neuromodulator guide >](#)
- [Talk through the cost >](#)

Continue the conversation.

[Book a consultation](#)

[Open the current guide](#)

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