

## RESTYLANE

**Restylane** (manufactured by Q-med, Sweden) is a gel composed of non-animal stabilized hyaluronic acid. This is a biodegradable clear substance that can be injected into or just below the dermis layer of the skin to provide volume below a wrinkle. It is used in our practise for naso-labial creases or filling out the areas near the eye (the tear trough concavity or the naso-jugal fold).

The product was launched in 1996; more than 1.5 million treatments have been performed. Injection can be carried out as an office procedure, there is some associated swelling, discomfort, and redness that usually dissipates within two days.

### Alternatives to Restylane

#### No further treatment

**Fat injection:** Fat is harvested with a special needle from one area of the body such as inner thigh. The fat is concentrated and then reinjected to replace lost volume in the face. This procedure can be done as a day case under local anaesthetic but requires an operating theatre to ensure sterility. This can provide a relatively long lasting solution to volume loss (perhaps 8 years or more). There is some unpredictability in the survival of the fat, and it is not suitable for very fine wrinkles. Micro fat injection is a new strategy, which involves using an extremely fine needle for collection and delivery of fine drops of fat. There are anecdotal reports of better fat survival and a greater predictability of the final result.

**Scupltra:** (manufactured by Dermik laboratories, USA) is a suspension of poly-L-lactic acid micro-spheres, which can be used for deeper wrinkles. It is reported to have a prolonged effect, it may be suitable for patients who have had some success with Restylane, but who want a more long lasting solution. It is painful to inject and requires a local anaesthetic nerve block.

**Radiofrequency skin tightening:** I have no experience of this non-invasive reportedly painless treatment that has been shown in some cases to tighten the skin around wrinkles.

**Surgery:** skin can be pulled tighter by surgery, there are risks and pros and cons associated with any operation. Injection of Restylane or fat can be used to improve the results of surgery by providing volume to the rejuvenated face.

#### Post injection care

There is no way to prevent "physiological swelling" after injection, ice or cool gauze may improve comfort but is not proven to reduce swelling or bruising. Reducing extremes of facial expression for 4 days might help to reduce clumping of the gel. Do not massage the area in the first 2 days as this may disperse the gel and reduce the effectiveness.

#### Common potential complications

Touch-up injections can be required to improve asymmetry or unevenness. Thick oily skin can produce pustules after injection of any filler. Allergic reactions are extremely rare but have been reported after use of injectable fillers, they are reportedly more common in patients with fair rather than dark skin.

Prolonged redness after injection is arguably the most common risk. Ridges can develop in rare cases. Lumps have been reported with the injection of semi-permanent fillers, particularly after injection into the lips. These usually dissipate, lumps forming after two years have been reported in isolated cases with these products, treatment would require steroid injection or in extremely rare cases surgery.

**If you have any problems please contact me so that I can advise or provide help.**