

Sculptra Injections

Sculptra is completely different from typical filler injections. This thin liquid solution is injected in most areas of the face to stimulate your body to naturally make its own collagen. We can also inject Sculptra on the chest for the décolleté, the neck for crepiness, and the lower or upper arms for crepiness. For the backs of the hands, Dr. Brown prefers Radiesse injections for more thickness in this area. With Sculptra, the collagen formation is a slow, gradual result which takes several months after the last injection. However, results often last 2 years or more. Because we naturally lose more collagen as we age, it is recommended that one at least Sculptra session be repeated every year for maintenance. Some patients prefer a touch-up twice a year if they need extra correction.

Sculptra is made from poly-L-lactic acid, which is also the same material found in some absorbable stitches used in surgery for many years. Most patients need 3-4 separate injection sessions, with 1 or 2 vials each session, typically spaced every 4 weeks. The general rule of thumb is that a person will need 1 vial of Sculptra per decade of life (so a 60-year-old could do 3 sessions with 2 vials each time, or slowly add 1 vial each month for 6 separate treatments). However, the total amount needed depends mainly on the degree of collagen growth desired. Some people need more correction, while others need less. We can always begin with 3 sessions and reassess after 4 months before adding more. This product is designed to increase the skin thickness and provide volume and support. It works well for filling in around the eyes and lateral cheeks. Patients with thin skin or overall volume loss on the face are often the best candidates for this treatment.

Before Your Treatment

- To minimize bruising, avoid alcohol, aspirin, ibuprofen, fish oil, and vitamin E for 7 days prior to your treatment. All these agents thin the blood and may cause more bleeding and bruising. Begin Arnica supplements 1-2 days prior to your injections to help minimize bruising. This herbal supplement can also be taken right after the procedure and 4 times a day to help the bruising resolve much earlier. This is available at health food stores and at the front desk. We also carry vitamin K oxide (Auriderm) cream in the office which helps the bruising to resolve more rapidly.
- Have your collagen and Juven ready for after the treatment (more on this below).

After Your Treatment

- **AVOID** all daily anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks before and after each Sculptra treatment, if possible. This includes aspirin, Advil, Aleve, and prednisone. You can take Tylenol, if needed. Taking anti-inflammatory medications may limit the desired collagen stimulation from Sculptra. (If you need to take Advil one day, it will be fine).
- Immediately after the procedure you will have slight swelling in the injection areas. Apply ice packs off and on to help with any swelling or tenderness. Sleeping elevated and on your back helps to prevent excess swelling under the eyes.
- It is important to firmly **MASSAGE** all the treated areas for 7 days after your treatment. This should be done twice a day for about 2 minutes. Use a moisturizer or wet hands to avoid friction on the skin. Massage will help to prevent small nodules in the skin as the collagen begins to develop.

- As with any injections, you may develop bruising after the procedure. Arnica pills and our vitamin K cream (Auriderm) can help. Bruises can be covered with makeup immediately. We recommend Dermablend makeup if you need a heavy concealer to cover up bruising. Also, color corrector makeup helps; yellow concealer under foundation covers bluish bruises and green concealer covers red ones. If you have any bruising that persists after one week, you can begin with warm compresses to increase blood flow and help flush away the bruising products under the skin.
- While we are trying to stimulate collagen, you must take **collagen supplements** to provide the necessary building blocks. I personally take collagen every day, but it is important to ensure you have collagen or Juven (see below) for a month after every collagen-stimulating procedure. Drinking traditional bone broth (or cooking with it) is a great, tasty way to do this, but some patients find it too cumbersome and time-consuming. Many patients prefer to add **collagen peptide powders** to their morning coffee. These powders are typically derived from boiling down cow hides. They go great in coffee or smoothies but would be overpowering for water or lighter drinks. Vital Proteins (available at HEB) is a good brand. Sources of marine collagen are great for skin as well. If you prefer collagen in a capsule form, Ancestral Supplements brand is my favorite. Their source comes from grass-fed, chemical-free cattle in New Zealand. This collagen has NOT been processed with high heat or denatured like all the other powder products have. Because it is freeze-dried and in the original state, it includes much more than just collagen peptides, such as important bio-active growth factors, chondroitin sulfates, and many other non-denatured active proteins. This helps to support the skin, hair, nails, joints, bones, teeth, and cartilage. Take 6 capsules per day. With all collagen supplements, it can take 2-3 months to start seeing results in the skin, and up to 6 months for nails and hair. We do carry the collagen capsules at the front desk (\$55), or you can get them online at www.ancestralsupplements.com. If you would like similar savings online, simply use the discount code "BrownMD".

For even better collagen stimulation after procedures, I highly recommend **Juven Therapeutic Nutrition Powder** supplement (available online). It is scientifically proven to increase both collagen and muscle mass. I personally use the **unflavored** version to avoid any added sugar. The taste alone is terrible, but you can mix it into coffee, fruit or tomato juice, yogurt, applesauce, or any other non-boiling food or drink. I personally like to mix it into ½ cup spaghetti sauce with some grated parmesan to completely conceal the taste. Many patients also like the **Orange-flavored** version, and it tastes better if it is diluted with double the amount of water. The fruit-punch flavored is the least favorite version. I personally use 1 Juven packet per day in the evening and 1 collagen dose in the morning instead of using Juven twice a day. Then, you can make a box of 30 last a complete month. Older patients have better results taking Juven twice a day.

- A few days after Sculptra injections, the face will look as it did before the treatment. Sculptra works gradually to replace lost collagen. Visible results typically appear slowly and naturally over several months. We don't expect to see any noticeable results with just one treatment. It takes time to grow collagen, but it's a very natural process.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office. We are here to help!