

## When beauty turns ugly

You may have been shocked by recent media stories exposing the worrying rise in botched lip filler treatments by unqualified and unregistered practitioners. Keen to exploit the current trend for overblown pouts sported by reality TV stars, they use social media to entice teenagers with cut price deals, most of whom have no comprehension of the risks involved and see it as a beauty rather than an invasive medical treatment. You might be surprised that this is all legal.

Non-surgical treatments have become part of our regular grooming routine, quickly overtaking surgical ones in popularity because people often prefer a discreet freshen up rather than a radical change. This surge in demand, combined with lack of regulation has left an ethical vacuum where standards have become compromised and clients put at risk. Despite warnings by the 2103 Keogh Report, anyone can still legally buy a dermal filler and inject someone. There is slightly more protection with Botox, which is a prescription-only medicine, so needs to be prescribed by a supervising doctor, but can be injected by someone who has only completed a one-day training course.

Unregistered practitioners are unlikely to be covered by insurance should anything go wrong and may not have the medical knowledge to rectify the situation. Non-medical premises such as homes, offices, salons, and hotels may not meet infection control standards necessary to stop the spread of HIV or Hepatitis. Unapproved substances can cause nerve damage, respiratory and kidney failure, and permanent damage. You don't want to be a guinea pig for cheaper, inferior products. Everyone thinks it won't happen to them until it does – you only have one face.

Experience is crucial in such a competitive market. Fillers especially are very technique sensitive. For example it is very easy to overfill cheeks which makes the under eye area look hollow. A forehead frozen with Botox looks incongruous in contrast to loss of elasticity along the jawline. If the wrong muscles are injected, eyebrows can droop and your smile will be lopsided. Try hiding that from your work colleagues.

Cowboy practitioners have given ethical practitioners a bad name, but the vast majority of treatments are safe and successful. But how do you find a reputable practitioner? Let Cosme do your research for you – we know the right questions to ask. You need a practitioner who is not just up to date with all the latest skills, but who also listens to your concerns. Someone who will explain the procedure thoroughly, including any potential risks, whilst also giving realistic expectations. We check qualifications, safety and professionalism; all practitioners must be comprehensively insured.

Get peace of mind with Cosme.