

The Ogee

The complex contours of the human face help define our identity and beauty. Those same contours also provide clues to our age.

Research suggests that our eyes and brain can detect changes as small as 1mm (0.039 in) in the face of others almost instantly. Therefore, facial rejuvenation is all about maintaining those very subtle contours and fighting against the changes which give clues to our age.

Many changes occur in the face with time, and a number of these seem to be **genetically programmed**. This is not to say that external factors such as sun exposure, quality of our skin care regimens, and smoking, don't play a significant part as well. However, in this article, I'm directing comments to the changes we can't control.

The aesthetically ideal, **youthful cheek should have a fuller upper portion which gently curves into a less full lower portion**. Architects call this shape an **ogee curve**. They use it because it is appealing to the human eye. Over time however, the aging process leads to a decrease of the malar fat pad which blunts the natural ogee curve. The central cheek may also lose volume, but the effect is usually less dramatic. Conversely, fat tends to accumulate along the jaw line creating a jowl. Although these changes are programmed in our genetic code, it doesn't mean we just surrender and watch them occur.

What are the **options to restore the youthful ogee**? The volume may be replenished with fat transferred from some other body area or with a dermal filler. Dermal fillers are injectable medications which are designed to plump the tissue. For the upper cheek area, the most commonly utilized products are Restylane Lyft®, Juvederm Voluma®, and Sculptra®. Other products may also be used in this area. The guidance of an expert injector is indispensable for choosing, and utilizing the right product.

In my experience, **fat grafting has provided the most natural appearing rejuvenation of the upper cheek area**. But, it is not without limitations. Fat used for grafting must be taken from some other body area, most commonly the stomach or thighs. Delicate handling of the fat during the transfer process is extremely important. Then, the fat is re-injected. Because it is completely natural, there is much more variability in the response from patient to patient as compared to a dermal filler. More than one fat grafting treatment may be required to achieve the desired result. Some patients respond better than others. For those who do well with fat grafting, the effect can last a very long time. Although permanence is theoretically possible, the reality is that the body is programmed to remove fat from the upper cheek area. Being 100% natural, the transferred fat is subject to programmed volume loss as well.



In contrast, dermal fillers behave in a much more predictable fashion. Since these are pharmaceutical grade products, they tend to be very consistent in their effect and duration. Likewise, if placed properly, dermal fillers may restore a natural fullness. Although their duration of effectiveness is limited

to months, **dermal fillers tend to last longer in the upper cheek area than in other areas of the face**. We assume this is due to less motion in this area, but the deeper placement of the filler in this region may also enhance longevity. Fillers have the advantage of convenience, ease of placement, predictable duration, and a high safety margin. If performed properly, dermal fillers can provide a very satisfying, soft and natural cheek ogee curve.

The options are broad in the quest to restore the naturally beautiful ogee curve of the cheek. Your board certified plastic surgeon is the best guide for selecting the right choice for you.

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Dr. David Kirm is a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon who is devoted to advanced techniques in Cosmetic Surgery of the Face, Breast, and Body. In private practice since 1998, he is located in a state of the art facility which includes a full service skin care center. The practice is focused on personalized patient care and attention to detail. Where possible, Dr. Kirm utilizes minimally invasive procedures. The goal is to deliver quality clinical results while minimizing patient recovery time. Examples of this include a no-drain tummy tuck, armpit incision breast augmentation with gel or saline implants, fat grafting, and a short scar facelift. In addition, Dr. Kirm and nurse-injectors Carey Sanders, RN and Shirley Ramsey DNP, APRN, offer a full spectrum of non-surgical treatments such as Botox®, Dysport®, Dermal Fillers, Kybella®, & Laser.