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Would you have a lip implant?

SADIE NICHOLAS

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Leslie Ash's infamous 'trout pout' might have given lip augmentation a bad name, but there's no denying scores of celebrities use clinical injections to plump up their lips, giving them a fuller, more sensual pout.

Inspired by this very modern trend, a revolutionary technique has been developed which means that instead of collagen injections you can have silicon implants in your lips - in just 15 minutes. SADIE NICHOLAS spoke to three women who underwent the treatment:

Jackie Hackett, 44, is separated from her husband and works as an office receptionist. She lives in Bracknell, Berkshire, with daughter Samantha, 17, a college student. Jackie says:

Half-an-hour after having permanent lip implants, an operation that took less time than a morning coffee, I was shopping in Tesco and nobody batted an eyelid.



After a lifetime of hating the thin squiggles that masqueraded as my lips, it's hard to believe two small implants resembling little worms have given me the luscious lips I've always longed for.

My lips have always been thin, especially the top one, and they shrunk even more as I aged.

Over the years I've tried everything to get a beautiful pout. So-called plumping creams and lipsticks did nothing more than make my lips tingle, and lip-enhancing liners left me looking more Coco the Clown than Coco Chanel.

As an office receptionist I'm the first face people see at my company, and I became aware I was no

longer lifting my head to greet them, so selfconscious was I of my thin lips.

Last year, I seriously considered splashing out a few hundred pounds on lip-filling injections, but when I saw photos of Leslie Ash's botched 'trout pout' it put me off. Then I read about PermaLip - the equivalent of breast implants for your lips.

The surgeon, Patrick Mallucci, said the implants would give my lips the fullness and curvature that had always eluded me.

He explained they were made of non-rupture, soft silicon and came in three different lengths - 55mm, 60mm and 65mm - with widths of 3mm, 4mm and 5mm respectively. They cost from £2,000.

They're tapered at each end to marry with natural lip shape and are designed to give a boost to the lips according to how much volume you want. Best of all, the procedure would take only 15 minutes under local anaesthetic.

I would gladly have gone ahead on the spot, but he insisted I took a few days to think about it.

Two weeks later, against all the advice of family and friends, I arrived for my operation. My daughter sent a text which read simply: "Mum, please don't do it", and I'd deflected a barrage of opposition from others I'd told.

I had a mastectomy on my right breast when I was diagnosed with cancer in 2000, and they thought I was mad to choose to have more surgery.

But surviving cancer, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and my hair falling out taught me that if there's something you want to do in life that will make you happy - do it.

I was also reassured that if I didn't like the lip implants the surgeon would simply remove them. What was there to lose?

My operation - paid for out of my savings - was carried out in a small theatre where I lay on an operating table in the clothes I'd arrived in. My mouth was cleaned with an antiseptic solution.

Local anaesthetic was injected under my nose on both sides, beneath my bottom lip and into both lips, like little bee stings.

With the area numb, a tiny incision was made in each corner of my mouth, then a fine implement was used to cut a tunnel through the lip, into which the implant was placed. I had the medium-sized implant on my top lip and the slimmest on my plumper bottom lip.

Two tiny dissolvable stitches in each corner completed the job.

All I could feel was a bit of tugging.

And 15 minutes later I was sitting up admiring my new lips in a mirror, while Mr Mallucci explained I must not have hot food or drinks for 48 hours, should sleep with an extra pillow under my head for a week while the implants bonded with the lip tissue, and described simple mouth exercises.

He prescribed a short course of antibiotics to prevent infection, and painkillers should I need them - I did once the anaesthetic wore off. My lips were sore, but as soon as the painkillers kicked in, I was fine.

I had a shock the day after the surgery when I woke up to find I did look like Leslie Ash, and for a moment I was terrified I'd made a dreadful - and expensive - mistake. But when I rang the clinic, they told me the swelling was normal for the delicate lip area and it would subside in a few days.

Sure enough it did, and now my lips are healed I can't stop smiling: they're full and natural looking and I can't feel the implants inside even when I eat or give my daughter a kiss.

The girls at work have noticed there is something different about me, but can't put their finger on it - which makes me smile.

Sarah Crafer, 24, is a model and lives with her family in Epping, Essex. She says:

A day after I had this operation my lips were so swollen I could have doubled as the pneumatic model Alicia Douvall who, thanks to too much surgery, looks as though her face has been blown up with a bike pump.



Let's just say it's not a look I wanted to emulate - especially not for that much money.

But, thankfully, it was short-lived, and I'm now the proud owner of a perfect pout, which is a relief because I went against the wishes of my parents and closest friends to have the surgery.

They thought it was totally unnecessary, but the bottom line is that I've long hated my thin top lip. Working as a model, I suppose I scrutinise my looks more than most, especially as so many of my colleagues have gorgeous Angelina Jolie-style pouts.

I'd grown fed-up of using expensive glosses and creams that promised to leave my lips full and kissable, results which were short-lived and made them sore. So when I read about PermaLip I called the clinic to find out more.

When, during my subsequent consultation, the surgeon explained how fast the procedure was and that it would all be done under local anaesthetic, I decided I would give it a go, simply because it wasn't some awful major surgery that would be irreversible.

Unfortunately for me, I let the hard sell lull me into a false sense of security in believing the operation would be a painless experience.

The enormity of what I was doing didn't hit me until I walked into the clinic's theatre a fortnight

later.

Faced with an operating table and a surgeon in medical gowns, it dawned on me that no matter how quick this was going to be, it was still an operation. I felt sick as I recalled my sister warning me I'd end up with horror lips.

But at the same time, I remembered all the angst my lips had caused me over the years, took a deep breath and climbed on to the operating table.

I found it quite painful when the anaesthetic was administered to the sensitive areas around my mouth and then into my lips.

I've never liked needles - and can you imagine a worse place on your body to have them pushed into you?

Within minutes the entire area was numb, and the surgeon prepared to make a small incision at either side of my mouth. He'd chosen the biggest implant for my top lip and the smaller one for my fuller lower lip.

Once he had made a tunnel under the skin, he inserted the implants. He manipulated them into place with his fingers before stitching the wounds.

As the anaesthetic wore off over the next few hours, I reached for an ice pack from the freezer to nurse my swelling lips. I underestimated how much it would hurt. I found myself dashing to the chemist to collect the antibiotics and painkillers.

However, three days after my surgery the discomfort had gone, and I found myself at a friend's party lapping up the attention as people told me how well they thought I looked. It's liberating to go out and not spend all night feeling conscious of my scrawny smile.

I don't have a boyfriend to test how kissable my new lips are, but one of my male friends - who tried to talk me out of having the implants - said they look great.

Julie Franks, 37, is a TV extra and lives in Yardley Wood, Birmingham, with husband Mitchell, 40, who works in transport, and their six children. Julie says:

Men just don't understand women's insecurities. They don't have fat days or days when they feel so down about their appearance it affects their whole personality.

Whenever I complained about my thin lips, my husband would dismiss it and tell me I was being daft.



But he wasn't the one who couldn't muster a pout if his life depended on it. There are worse things in life, I know, but my lacklustre lips really got to me, especially as lip liners and plumping creams which promised to turn them into a pout Angelina Jolie would be proud of, inevitably failed to deliver.

I was on the verge of splashing out on semipermanent lip-liner or injection fillers, when I saw a PermaLip ad. I felt it was something I wanted to try, to cheer myself up.

A few days later, I arrived for a consultation at the London Plastic Surgery Associates, to see if I was suitable for the procedure. To my delight, I was, and I gave the surgeon a brief to create the fuller lips I'd always wanted.

He explained everything in such detail that by the time I had the operation I wasn't scared. My husband wasn't against the idea because he's seen how much my lips have bothered me in the past.

He sat with me during the procedure and confessed afterwards there was no way he could have gone through it himself. But, as I reminded him, I've given birth to six children, so having lip implants wasn't so bad.

I felt no pain or discomfort except four hours after the operation when the anaesthetic started to wear off. But as soon as I took a couple of the painkillers prescribed by the surgeon, the discomfort faded.

I followed the surgeon's instructions to a T in order to reduce my recovery time: no hot food or drink for 48 hours; lots of moisturising cream on my lips; thrice daily bathing of the little wounds in an antibacterial solution; and three pillows in bed at night to keep my face elevated to alleviate swelling.

Back home a few hours after the surgery I was greeted with mixed reactions. One of my sons laughed, my youngest told me my lips looked poorly and my brother said I looked like one of the puppets from Spitting Image.

But I had faith, and less than a week later with the swelling almost gone, the compliments started to pour in. My friends think my new lips look gorgeous and I am thrilled with my new look.

Best of all, my husband said he loves my sexy new pout and couldn't wait to kiss me once the swelling had gone down. And, in case you were wondering, neither of us could feel the implants.

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