

POLYNUCLEOTIDE INJECTIONS

What are polynucleotide injections?

Polynucleotide injections are injectable treatments designed to improve skin quality, hydration, and repair. They contain highly purified fragments of DNA (polynucleotides), usually derived from fish sources such as salmon or trout, which are biocompatible and safe for medical use.

Rather than adding volume like dermal fillers, polynucleotides work by supporting the skin's natural regenerative processes, helping to improve overall skin health and appearance.

Why might I choose to have this procedure?

You might consider polynucleotide injections if you want to improve skin quality rather than change facial shape or volume.

They are commonly used to:

- Improve skin hydration and texture
- Reduce fine lines and early signs of ageing
- Restore radiance to tired or dull skin
- Improve delicate areas such as under the eyes
- Support skin repair in sun-damaged or sensitive skin

They may also be used on the scalp to support hair and skin health.

What does the procedure involve?

You will first have a consultation to review your medical history, discuss your concerns, and assess whether treatment is appropriate. The procedure involves a series of small injections placed just under the skin using a fine needle or cannula. A topical anaesthetic cream may be applied beforehand to improve comfort.

Treatment usually takes around 20–30 minutes. Most patients describe mild stinging or pinprick sensations. You can normally return to most daily activities immediately afterwards, although you may be advised to avoid strenuous exercise, alcohol, and touching the treated area for the rest of the day.

What are the benefits of the procedure?

Polynucleotide injections aim to improve overall skin quality in a gradual and natural way.

Potential benefits include:

- Increased skin hydration
- Improved elasticity and firmness
- Smoother skin texture
- Reduction in fine lines
- Brighter, healthier-looking skin

Results develop over several weeks as the skin regenerates. A course of treatments is usually recommended for optimal results.

What are the risks and potential side effects?

Most side effects are mild and temporary. These may include:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Small raised bumps at injection sites
- Bruising
- Tenderness

These effects usually settle within a few days.

Less common risks include infection, prolonged swelling, or allergic reaction (rare). As with all injectable treatments, there is a small risk of complications, which is minimised by choosing a qualified medical practitioner.

What alternatives are available?

Alternative treatments will depend on your goals. Options may include:

- Dermal fillers (for volume loss)
- Botulinum toxin injections (for dynamic lines)
- Skin boosters or hyaluronic acid injections
- Chemical peels or laser treatments
- Topical skincare such as retinoids or prescription creams

Your practitioner will help you decide which option is most suitable.

What should I expect after the procedure?

After treatment, you may notice small bumps, redness, or mild swelling at the injection sites. These typically settle within 24–72 hours. Bruising can occur but is usually mild.

You should avoid rubbing or massaging the area, and avoid strenuous exercise, alcohol, and heat exposure (such as saunas) for 24 hours. Results appear gradually over several weeks.

How many treatments will I need?

A course of treatment is usually recommended, consisting of 2-4 treatments spaced 2-4 weeks apart. Maintenance treatments may be performed every 6-12 months.

Who should not have this procedure?

You should not have polynucleotide injections if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, if you have an active skin infection in the treatment area, or if you have a known allergy to any component of the product (including fish-derived ingredients).

Caution may be required if you have certain autoimmune or bleeding disorders. A full medical history will be taken at consultation to ensure the treatment is safe for you.

Who can perform this procedure?

In the UK, polynucleotide injections for cosmetic purposes should only be carried out by qualified, registered healthcare professionals such as doctors, dentists, or nurses with appropriate training in aesthetic medicine.

They should practise in a regulated clinical environment and be able to recognise and manage complications. Choosing a suitably qualified practitioner is essential for safe treatment.

Will I need a consultation?

Yes. A face-to-face consultation is essential before treatment. This allows discussion of your concerns and expectations, review of your medical history, and explanation of the risks and benefits.

You should also have the opportunity to ask questions before deciding whether to proceed.

Where can I get more information?

You can find more information from:

- The British Cosmetic Dermatology Group (BCDG)

- The British Association of Dermatologists (www.bad.org.uk)
- The Joint Council for Cosmetic Practitioners (JCCP)
- NHS guidance on cosmetic procedures

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