

Kylie Jenner's lip fillers: how young is too young?

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The worst kept secret in show business is out: 17-year-old Kylie Jenner has admitted to using lip fillers. Even before today's admission, those in the know were highly sceptical about her claims that her plump pout was the result of make up.

“Unfortunately, she has that tell-tale ‘duck lip’ look going on,” observed Dr. **Lyle M. Back, a US-based certified plastic surgeon**, long before Kylie's admission. “It

looks like all the filler went into her upper lip – none in the lower.”

In the UK and the US, plastic surgery can only be carried out on patients aged 18 and over. Patients under this age will need parental consent. However, in the UK, dermal fillers are completely unregulated, and in the past, reports produced by the Department of Health have labelled dermal fillers as “a crisis waiting to happen.”

Most plastic surgeons agree that the optimum age for lip-filling procedures is 37. Lips start to thin in the late 20s, but the signs only become visible in our late thirties. “35 is the average age of my female clientele for Botox and fillers in the UK but in France it's 45,” says Dr Jules Nabet, renowned French cosmetic doctor. Kylie's lips certainly won't have started to thin – in fact, she hasn't even stopped growing yet, and her decision to opt for fillers is a reminder that growing numbers are using these procedures to enhance natural attributes to ridiculous proportions, instead of subtly improving what they've already got.

Irrespective of the law, many experts feel that there's simply no reason for under-18s to undergo this type of treatment. “My philosophy is that it's ethically and medically wrong to perform this type of treatment on anyone under 18,” says Dr Ayham Al-Ayoubi from the London Medical & Aesthetic Clinic on Harley Street.

“No one under 18 should undergo cosmetic procedures unless there's a specific medical condition



where reconstructive work is needed and parental consent given. Before the age of 18, the body is still changing and facial features still developing. Additionally, teenage years can be awkward times and young people can feel self-conscious about one feature or another. However, as we grow, we learn to love our irregularities and feel more comfortable.”

From left, Khloe Kardashian, Kylie Jenner, Kris Jenner, Kourtney Kardashian, Kim Kardashian and

Kendall Jenner. In Kylie’s defence, it’s easy to see why she might feel pressure to go down the plastic surgery route. Several members of her family have had plastic surgery, her father’s undergoing a sex change and she recently revealed that she was just nine when she overheard her mother telling a friend that she thought Kylie needed a nose job.

“In her young mind, she might believe that their success was the result of surgery,” says Dr. Gilda, relationship expert and life coach. “She’s connected that to success and doesn’t see a downside. She looks so much like Kim now. Look at how successful Kim has been!”

Dr Gilda also pointed out that Kylie’s decision to turn to surgery is proof that the wrinkles and blemishes once seen as part of life are increasingly being seen as flaws which must be removed. “When they see every line and crease as being something bad and negative, they want to change that,” added Dr Gilda. “Nobody is a Barbie doll and there is no one who doesn’t have signs of living.”

Plastic surgery pressure

At the same time, experts point out that it’s important not to group all types of cosmetic surgery together. “One mustn’t demonise cosmetic surgery - it can be an enormous help to those who would otherwise be deeply unhappy,” says Dr Eileen Bradbury, a psychologist from London’s Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. “But there’s a huge amount of money to be made and therefore a huge amount of potential exploitation. Young people face a sense of competition in terms of looking as good as possible.”

There’s probably a limitless pot of cash for Kylie to dip into should she want to continue down the plastic surgery route, but it’s not just about money or self-esteem. Body parts which have been cosmetically altered are more likely to deform as they grow (and at 17, Kylie isn’t fully grown) and, in the same way people who’ve experienced major weight loss get stretch marks, lips which have been grossly over-inflated can end up with more wrinkles than before if the person stops using fillers.

In summary?

While there's a time and a place for certain procedures, we're struggling to understand why Kylie opted for lip fillers. At the same time, it's important that younger people with a genuine need for corrective surgery can access it, which is why age limits are such a hot topic. "There are younger people with genuine afflictions which aren't going to go away on their own and which can be treated with the right surgery and psychological support," points out Mr. Ian Whitworth, consultant plastic, reconstructive and aesthetic surgeon at Nuffield Health Bournemouth Hospital.

"The important thing to consider is that the individual meets the specific criteria, rendering them appropriate patients. The decision as to whether a young person is suitable for surgery should be thoroughly examined by their prospective surgeon, the patient and their legal guardians." Sadly, in Kylie's case, it appears that none of these precautionary measures have been undertaken.