

Beauty treatments – including risky anti-wrinkle injections with fillers – are becoming increasingly popular. In 2024 a total of 82 clinics, doctors’ practices and cosmetic studios were inspected and the use of fillers was reviewed – in the interest of customer safety. These inspections were carried out by the cantonal therapeutic products authorities, the Office for Health of Liechtenstein and Swissmedic, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, in a nationally coordinated programme.

### Risks posed by improperly performed anti-wrinkle injections

A beautician posts appealing videos and before/after pictures on social media, extolling the virtues of treatments involving anti-wrinkle injections. A customer makes an appointment. The beautician injects an unknown filler under the customer’s skin. The next day the customer’s face swells unevenly and signs of paralysis develop. Her best friend has to take her to the emergency department. She suffers lasting nerve damage. The improper use of the filler by the beautician is shown to be the cause.

Cases like this have led the cantons to intensify surveillance of the use of fillers in collaboration with Medical Devices Surveillance at Swissmedic.

### What are fillers and what requirements must be met when using them?

Fillers are clear, gel-like substances that are injected into the skin to smooth wrinkles or boost the volume of the lips and cheeks. They are considered medical devices. Most of them consist of hyaluronic acid and they remain in the body for around 6 to 18 months. They are usually injected into the face, a part of the body that contains a large number of nerves and

blood vessels. A filler injection in the wrong place can cause serious health problems, such as nerve damage, bruising or tissue death. This is why these products may only be used by doctors or qualified healthcare professionals with corresponding training – and in the latter case only under the direct supervision and responsibility of a doctor.

### Checking the use and product safety of fillers

It is vital for the products to be of high quality and for them to be used correctly by qualified users to ensure customer safety. Between March and November 2024, the cantonal therapeutic products authorities worked with Swissmedic to carry out systematic inspections of 82 cosmetic studios, clinics offering cosmetic surgery and doctors’ practices with the aim of reviewing these aspects. The cantons selected the inspected establishments mainly on the basis of information submitted by the general public and research carried out in social media. Depending on the severity of the violations noted, measures ranging from warnings and confiscation of products to legal consequences such as fines were taken.

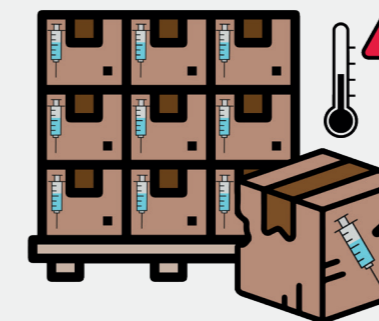
Some of the confiscated fillers were tested by Swissmedic for conformity and safety.

### A summary of the main points



In 55% of the inspected establishments the users did not have the professional qualification required to use fillers.

93% of the treatments that were improper because the users were not qualified were carried out in cosmetic studios.



85% of the clinics/doctors’ practices were able to show that they were storing the fillers correctly in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

In contrast, only 12% of the cosmetic studios maintained the storage conditions.

## Findings of the inspections

Treatments with fillers were carried out in 53\* of the 82 establishments inspected.

Most of the violations concerned the use of fillers by individuals who did not have the necessary professional qualification, i.e. they were neither doctors nor qualified healthcare professionals with corresponding training who were authorised to inject fillers under the direct supervision of a doctor. The inspections showed that insufficiently qualified users, and accordingly the risk of improper use, are more likely to be found in cosmetic studios.

87% of the fillers were obtained in Switzerland or the European Union; the establishments were unable to name the source of the products in 13% of cases. Most of the products came from established manufacturers. The storage conditions (e.g. temperature) stipulated by the manufacturer must be maintained to ensure the quality and sterility of the products during their shelf life. The inspections showed that this was not the case in all establishments. Fillers with expired shelf lives were also found. The storage conditions were maintained substantially better in clinics and doctors' practices than in cosmetic studios.

The injection of fillers by unqualified individuals and incorrect storage pose a risk to customers. In response to the large number of violations, the cantonal therapeutic products authorities and the Office for Health of Liechtenstein will continue to perform inspections relating to beauty treatments and consider further measures.

## Fillers are medical devices

Please refer to the [Swissmedic website](#) for further information.

### Swissmedic videos

#### [About medical devices](#)

(all videos about medical devices)

#### [What is a medical device?](#)

#### [What are the tasks of Swissmedic in the area of medical devices?](#)

#### [Products without a medical purpose – What are they?](#)

#### [Products without a medical purpose: procurement and use](#)

If you have questions or comments about fillers, please contact Swissmedic:

[questions.devices@swissmedic.ch](mailto:questions.devices@swissmedic.ch)

## How do I choose a suitable place for treatment with fillers?

### 1. Ask about the professional qualification of the person carrying out the treatment:

- When an injection with a filler is given, a doctor must be present and must supervise the treatment carried out by a qualified healthcare professional or must perform it themselves. In clinics and doctors' practices the individuals who use fillers are generally qualified to do this.
- Beauticians do NOT have the necessary qualification to inject fillers.

### 2. Look the person up: Licensed doctors are listed in the Medreg register of medical professions ([Health professions platform](#)). They must have an authorisation to practice their profession in the canton in which they work.

If your health has been damaged by treatment with fillers, contact a doctor you trust or the Dermatology department of a hospital to obtain an independent expert opinion and a written medical report. Contact the police if you wish to report a crime.

\*57 in the publication of 03.02.2025; corrected on 08.07.2025