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The First 48 Hours After Injectables, Laser, or Microneedling

Our Friends · Thursday, October 1st, 2026

A Knoxville nurse injector on what your skin is supposed to do in the two days after a visit, and the short list of things that are not part of the plan.

By Sarah Hitchcox, RN, BSN

The appointment is the short part. A Botox visit takes 10 to 15 minutes, a filler appointment is usually under an hour, and most of the laser treatments I offer have no downtime at all. The two days after are where people get nervous, because that's when the face in the mirror doesn't match the face they expected yet. Most of what shows up in that window is normal. A short list of things is not, and I'd rather you know both before you leave the chair.

What Normal Looks Like After Injectables

Botox, Dysport, and Jeuveau are neuromodulators. They relax the muscles that make dynamic wrinkles, and they do it slowly. Tox takes about two weeks to fully kick in, so at hour 48, your forehead may look exactly the way it did on the way in. That isn't a sign it didn't work. Dysport and Jeuveau often start to show within two to three days, but the full result is still a couple of weeks out. I compare Botox to working out. Nobody checks the mirror the morning after one gym session and decides the gym is broken.

The injection itself is a mild pinch with a tiny needle, and there's no downtime. You can go straight back to your day, but you cannot lie flat for the next 4 hours, there's no working out or exercising for the rest of the day, and no facials or massaging the face for the next 2 weeks.

Filler is the opposite on timing. The result shows immediately, and so does the swelling. Some swelling, redness, or bruising after filler is common and typically resolves within a few days. Patients usually leave a little swollen and a little more refreshed, and most go right back to normal activities. What you see on day two isn't the final shape, so don't judge symmetry yet. The same goes for SkinVive, the micro-droplet hyaluronic acid treatment for hydration rather than volume. Redness, swelling, and mild bruising at the injection sites usually subside within a few days.

Kybella has the longest normal window of the injectables. Swelling, redness, or bruising under the chin can take up to a few weeks to settle, so plan for that rather than being surprised by it.

What Normal Looks Like After Laser and Microneedling

Microneedling starts with numbing cream applied to the face so you're comfortable for the duration of the treatment. Afterward the skin is red, a little swollen, and mildly irritated, close to a sunburn, and that usually subsides within a day or two. Some effects can be seen right away, but the point of microneedling is collagen, and collagen takes time. Optimal results typically emerge after several sessions and over a few months, which is why I space sessions four to six weeks apart.



Photo: Anna Vlasova via Pexels

The laser services I offer are low-downtime by design. Skin revitalization, the "lunchtime laser facial", can leave slight redness right after that typically subsides quickly. Vascular lesion treatment for spider veins and facial redness feels like a rubber band snap and needs no downtime. Laser hair removal is a warm sensation or a light snap, with cooling built into the handpiece.

Everesse, the radiofrequency skin tightening, is the one people most often misjudge at 48 hours. Mild redness or puffiness can occur and typically resolves within hours, and makeup is usually fine the next day. The tightening itself comes from collagen remodeling over the following weeks and months. Early change shows in two to four weeks and peak results come around twelve weeks. If you're looking for the result on day two, you're about eleven weeks early.

What Is Not Part of the Plan

The list of true warning signs is short, and I'd rather you know it than guess. Botox carries a boxed warning about the toxin's effects spreading beyond the treatment area. Difficulty breathing, swallowing, or speaking after a treatment needs immediate medical attention. It's rare, and it is not a wait-and-see situation.

Beyond that, use the same approach I used in the emergency department. I didn't read faces there. I read the chief complaint, checked vital signs, and asked people where it hurt and what the pain felt like. At home you can run a plain version of that on yourself. What exactly do you see? Where is it? Is it better or worse than it was six hours ago? Bruising and swelling that are slowly fading are following the script. Anything that is getting worse after the first couple of days, or anything your

provider never described to you, is a reason to contact the office instead of a reason to search.

Asking isn't an imposition. A tox and filler follow-up is a regular appointment type at my Knoxville practice (**https://hitchcoxaesthetics.com/**), and I would rather look at a photo of a bruise than have you wonder about it for a week.

The Instructions That Beat the Internet

A rule you find online is background information, not a plan for your face. The same is true of a unit count or a study percentage. Your provider should explain what to expect for your specific treatment, in ordinary language, before you leave. Those instructions win over anything you read afterward. If you didn't get them, ask for them, and bring your medicine list and any previous treatment history so the answer is based on your circumstances.

Two days is long enough to see the normal stuff and too short to see the result. Bruises fade, swelling settles, and tox is still switching on. Give each treatment the time it actually needs, and if something is outside what you were told to expect, say so early.

Photo: Ivan Babydov via Pexels

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