



Allergy alert

With Dr Catherine Stone, as seen on TV One's *10 Years Younger*

Wary of reacting badly? Reduce your risk

Q I have allergies. Is it safe for me to try Botox or dermal fillers?

A There have been no allergic reactions with Botox therapy in over 30 years of using it, although it is worth checking with the clinic providing the treatments for you that they use the real Botox made by Allergan, as there have been proven allergies with some of the cheap "rip-off" imported products.

If the clinic seems cheap or dodgy, ask to see the vial before treatment, just to make sure.

Older dermal fillers such as the cow-based collagens Zyderm and Zyplast had a significant risk of allergic

reaction – between three to seven per cent of people treated – so required two clear skin tests before treatment.

Modern ones such as the hyaluronan-based fillers have a much lower risk – reports suggest the allergy rate with Restylane is probably less than 1 in 25,000 treatments, so you don't usually need skin testing prior to treatment.

An allergic reaction would normally be itching, redness or a rash, which settles with a steroid cream.

It also depends how bad your allergies are. If you get anaphylaxis – the most severe form where you can have difficulty breathing – it may be best to try a little skin test of the hyaluronan dermal filler in a controlled environment

(such as a doctor's office) where there's resuscitation equipment, oxygen and adrenaline. While there have been no reports of anaphylaxis so far, it is better to be safe than sorry. Our clinic has treated several people who suffer from multiple anaphylaxis, and there have been no problems.

If you usually get rashes or itching from specific things such as grass or antibiotics, you'll probably be fine – but you may want to be at a doctor's clinic, just in case. Also, try a temporary, rather than permanent, dermal filler. The risk of allergy is low with both, but if you did react, you'd know the product would disappear in time.

QUESTIONS FOR TRISTAN? WRITE TO wdaynz@acpmagazines.co.nz OR Woman's Day, Private Bag 92512, Wellesley Street, Auckland

