

FACE LIFT

Notes for guidance

The effects of aging often take their hardest and most obvious toll on our faces. We develop deep lines, creases, and wrinkles especially around our mouths. Our skin begins to droop around the lower halves of our faces, and we start develop deposits of fat where no fat used to be. In a culture that values youth and youthful appearances, an “old-looking” face can be perceived as a hindrance in our personal and professional lives. It can significantly reduce a person’s self-esteem and can prevent them from enjoying their lives to the fullest. For these reasons, face lifts have become one of the most popular plastic surgery choices.

Is a face lift right for you?

There are a number of reasons to consider getting a face lift. For some, the signs of aging shows on their face long before they begin physically feeling older, or because they want to look as young outside as they feel inside. Other patients view the procedure as an economic opportunity, as youth is often rewarded in our culture with more promotions, pay raises, and financial opportunities. As a result, looking younger can be an advantage in many careers. Of course, others may just want a change. They may be happy with their overall appearance but dissatisfied with the baggy skin and creases they see in the mirror, which a face lift can correct.

What is a face lift?

A face lift, also known as Rhytidectomy, is a surgical procedure in which the muscles in the lower half of the face are tightened, excess fat in the region is removed, and the extra skin is trimmed away. The combination of these actions results in a smoother looking, more youthful face. You’ll need to discuss with your surgeon exactly what changes you’re looking for during your individual consultation, so that he or she can customize the surgery to meet your needs.

Sometimes, face lifts are performed in outpatient medical facilities using just a local anesthetic and a sedative to help the patient relax. If this is the case for you, you’ll be awake during the procedure and may feel some sensations as your skin is pulled but your face will be numb to the pain. If you prefer a general anesthesia, some plastic surgeons will perform the procedure while you are completely asleep but you may need to be hospitalized overnight.

Are you a good candidate?

Good candidates for face lifts are either interested in correcting the lower portion of their faces or are planning to have additional work done on the upper half of the face. Because of the procedure’s limitations, a face lift will not get rid of wrinkles on your forehead or around your eyes; for this reason, a face lift is often combined with other procedures such as an endoscopic brow or forehead lift, or eyelid surgery.

Surgeons are also looking for patients who have realistic expectations. These are individuals who realize a face lift won’t dramatically change their appearance; it will simply erase some of the damage caused by the aging process.

Obviously, the best candidates are men and women who are already in good health. Surgeons prefer patients who are non-smokers. If you do smoke, you’ll need to stop smoking a few weeks before your operation because smoking can hinder healing. If you do have pre-existing health problems, such as diabetes, you may need to stay in the hospital after the procedure for a short observation period.

How is the procedure performed?

Before the surgery, you will have a consultation, where you and your surgeon will discuss exactly what you want to have done. Because face lifts can be customized to meet each patient's needs, you need to reach an agreement with your surgeon in advance so that you get the results you want.

During the procedure, surgeons start their incisions at the temple then cut down to and around the ear. The incision stops at the lower scalp. Making the incisions in these locations keeps visible scarring to a minimum. Once the incision is made, the surgeon will disconnect the fat and muscle from the skin so he or she can begin making the necessary changes. If necessary, extra fat can be removed from problem areas around the face and neck. Then, the surgeon will tighten the muscle to keep the lower face from sagging. When the surgeon finishes, he or she will remove any extra skin and stitch the remaining skin back in place.

Often, the surgeon will work on one side of the face at a time, so after completing one side the surgeon will repeat the procedure from the other half of your face. If you need work completed on your chin, a separate incision will be made there and the excess fat will be suctioned out.

The entire procedure can take a few hours and may even be broken up into two separate surgeries because of time, especially if additional procedures are being done at the same time to other parts of the face or body.

How long will it take before I feel normal again?

Most face lift patients report feeling back to normal after about three weeks. Even though the stitches are usually removed within 5 to 7 days of the surgery, your face may feel numb or stiff and be bruised or swollen for many days afterward. Pain after the surgery is usually very mild and is easily controlled with medications prescribed by your doctor.

Most people who undergo facelifts need to take 10 to 14 days off from work. If you work in a profession that is particularly strenuous, you may need to take off as long as three weeks. In fact, for 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery, your doctor will advise you to avoid any type of strenuous activity, including carry heavy objects (children, laundry, groceries, etc.) and even sex. Additionally, your surgeon will warn you about getting too much sun exposure for the first several months so don't expect to show off your new look on a beach soon after the procedure.

Are there any risks?

Face lifts are a very common procedure and rarely result in complications, especially when performed by a qualified and experienced surgeon. However, all surgical procedures do involve some type of risk.

Hematoma – pooling of blood under the skin – is one of the more common risks; if it occurs, the blood can be removed by the surgeon. Additionally, your facial nerves could be injured during the procedure but this is usually only a temporary problem and the nerves will heal on their own. Infections and problems with the anesthesia are risks with almost any type of surgery. Smoking and other health problems can increase your chances of not healing properly or of developing these risks.

Will I be happy with my results?

Initially, you may be disappointed by what you see in the mirror. For a few weeks, your face will look and feel distorted while it is healing. After the swelling and bruising disappear, you'll be able to get a good look at your more youthful face. Most patients will be happy with the results, especially if their expectations were realistic.

Further Information

This brochure has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon.

There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please fill in the online form on our website at www.surgeryone.co.uk. All enquiries are always treated confidentially.