

## Facelift

When you want a dramatic change to achieve a more youthful appearance, a facelift, or rhytidectomy, can be the answer. It's the most striking way to remove or reduce the appearance of wrinkles and sagging caused by age. A facelift won't stop the aging process, but it can help you achieve a firmer, fresher looking face. Some women say they look up to ten years younger after the surgery.

### ABOUT THE PROCEDURE

A facelift is designed to reduce wrinkles and sagging skin on the face, under the chin and along the jaw line. During the procedure, a surgeon will make incisions around your ears and hairline to help reduce the appearance of scars. The skin is then lifted up, facial and neck muscles are tightened, and excess skin is removed to give you a defined profile.

Sometimes a facelift is combined with other cosmetic procedures such as an eyelid lift, laser facial resurfacing, forehead lift, or liposuction of the neck.

### AM I A GOOD CANDIDATE?

Most people who choose to have a face-lift are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, although the procedure can be done on people in their 70s or 80s. People who are considered good candidates for a facelift have strong, well-defined bone structures and skin that still has some elasticity.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM A FACELIFT?

It's important to have realistic expectations when considering a facelift. A facelift can help you look younger and fresher, but it will not create a totally different look. A face-lift will not restore health or vitality, and it won't affect the thickness of your skin or change your skin tone. It's also important not to expect instant results—sometimes it can take up to six months to see the final result.

Your surgeon can help you understand what results you can expect and can advise you on combining your face-lift with other procedures.

### ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

As with any surgery, there are risks associated with having a face-lift. Although the majority of patients do not experience the following complications, you should discuss each of them with your surgeon to make sure you understand the risks, potential complications, limitations and consequences of facelift. Risks include but are not limited to: bleeding, infection, scarring, damage to deeper structures, including nerve injury, hair loss, delayed healing, surgical anesthesia complications, asymmetry, and a less-than-desired result.

Your surgeon can give you a detailed description of these risks, the potential benefits, your surgical and nonsurgical options, and the limitations of the procedure during your surgical consultation.

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### WHAT CAN I EXPECT BEFORE AND AFTER TREATMENT?

#### Before your treatment

Before you have any treatment, you will have a consultation with your surgeon, who will go over your goals and evaluate your skin and facial structure. You'll discuss the different options and whether you're a good candidate for the procedure. Your consultation is your chance to ask your doctor any questions you have and to bring up any concerns. You and your doctor should frankly discuss your expectations, the limitations and risks of the surgery, and the recovery process. It's a good idea to have a written list of questions to ask during your consultation, and writing down the answers can help you evaluate your options later.

Your surgeon will give you detailed and specific instructions on how to prepare for surgery. If you're a smoker, you will be asked to stop. If you're taking certain medications that may cause bleeding, you may be asked to stop taking them a short period before surgery.

Your face-lift will be done at our hospital, and, if you've elected to have other procedures at the same time, may last up to five hours. You can usually go home the same day as your surgery, but because the anesthesia may make you drowsy, you will need someone to drive you home.

You'll be given medications and anesthesia to make you more comfortable during surgery. Most patients prefer general anesthesia, but certain patients may be able to undergo a face-lift under intravenous sedation. You and your surgeon will decide which anesthetic is best for you before your surgery.

#### After your treatment

When the procedure is over, you'll be taken to a recovery room where your surgical team can monitor you closely. We'll provide medication to reduce any pain or discomfort you may experience. You may have a bandage wrapped around your face and tubes under your skin to help drain excess fluid. Your tubes will be removed in a day or two, and your bandages will be removed one to five days after surgery. Most stitches are removed after five days, though stitches or metal clips in the hairline may be left in longer.

Your face may feel stiff at first, and the areas around your face and ears may feel numb for several weeks. There will also be some bruising, which usually disappears after two to three weeks. You may be told to elevate your head for a couple of days to reduce swelling. You can also help reduce swelling with cold compresses.

There will be some scarring, but your surgeon will make the incisions in the natural contours of the ear, in the hairline, or below the chin so they will be less likely to show—they may even be unnoticeable!

### HOW LONG IS THE HEALING PROCESS?

Most people are out of bed in one to two days, but it's good to plan to take it easy for one week after surgery. Your surgeon will give you a better idea of when you can resume your normal activities. You will be advised to avoid strenuous activity for at least two weeks and avoid alcohol, steam baths, and saunas for several months. The healing process is gradual and can take up to six months. It may help to use makeup—there are special brands that are made to cover post-surgical bruising.