

Facelift

Rhytidectomy



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®

What is a Facelift?

The loss of youthful contours in the face can be due to a variety of factors including heredity, gravity, environmental conditions, and stress. A facelift, or rhytidectomy, is a surgical procedure that aims to improve the appearance of the face by tightening and repositioning the skin and underlying tissues.

A facelift improves visible signs of aging in the face and neck, such as:

- Sagging in the middle of your face
- Deep creases below the lower eyelids
- Deep creases along the nose extending to the corner of the mouth
- Fat that has fallen or has disappeared
- Loss of skin tone in the lower face that creates jowls
- Loose skin and excess fatty deposits under the chin and jaw that can give even a person of normal weight the appearance of a double chin

In general, good candidates for a facelift include:

- Healthy individuals who do not have medical conditions that impair healing
- Non-smokers/vapers
- Individuals with a positive outlook and realistic expectations

A variety of other procedures can further enhance the outcome of a facelift. They include:

- Facial implants or fat transfer
- Soft tissue augmentation to recontour the facial structure
- Resurfacing techniques to improve the tone and texture of facial skin
- Wrinkle reduction by injection of fat or fillers
- Brow lift surgery
- Eyelid surgery

What it won't do:

As a restorative surgery, a facelift does not change your fundamental appearance and cannot stop the aging process.

A facelift can only be performed surgically. Non-surgical rejuvenation treatments cannot achieve the same results, but may help delay the time at which a facelift becomes appropriate and complement the results of surgery.



Consultation & Preparing for Surgery

Be prepared to discuss the following during your consultation:

- Your surgical goals
- Medical conditions, drug allergies, and previous medical treatments
- Current medications, vitamins, herbal supplements, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use
- Previous surgeries

Your plastic surgeon will also:

- Evaluate your general health status and any pre-existing health conditions or risk factors
- Discuss your facelift options
- Examine and measure your face
- Take photographs
- Recommend a course of treatment
- Discuss likely outcomes of a facelift and any risks or potential complications
- Discuss the type of anesthesia that will be used

Special instructions you receive will cover:

- What to do in the night before and morning of surgery
- Post-operative care and follow-up



Facelift surgery may be performed in an accredited outpatient facility or in an ambulatory surgical center or a hospital. Prior to surgery, you may be asked to:

- Have a physical examination, including lab work
- Take certain medications or adjust your current medications
- Stop smoking or vaping*
- Avoid taking aspirin and certain anti-inflammatory drugs, as they can increase bleeding
- Arrange for someone to drive you to and from surgery and to stay with you for at least the first night following surgery

**Smoking decreases blood flow, which can impede wound healing and increase the risk of infection.*

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon questions. It's very important to understand all aspects of your facelift surgery, especially regarding your personal health history. It's natural to feel some anxiety, whether it's excitement for your anticipated new look or a bit of preoperative stress. Don't be shy about discussing these feelings with your plastic surgeon.

The Procedure

Step 1 – Anesthesia

Medications are administered for your comfort during the surgical procedure. The choices include intravenous sedation and general anesthesia. Your doctor will recommend the best choice for you.

Step 2 – The incision

Depending on the degree of change you'd like to see, your facelift choices include a **traditional facelift**, **limited incision facelift**, or a **neck lift**.

A **traditional facelift** usually involves making incisions along the hairline and in the natural creases of the face (such as near the ears) to lift and reposition the skin, muscles, and fat.

- Fat may be reshaped on the face, jowls, and neck and the underlying tissue is repositioned
- The skin is then draped over the newly contoured areas and any excess is trimmed
- A separate incision under the chin may also be performed to enhance the appearance of the aging neck

A **limited incision facelift**, also known as a “mini facelift” or “short scar facelift,” is a variation of the traditional facelift procedure. The main difference is that the incisions used in a limited incision facelift are smaller and fewer, which means less scarring. It is not as extensive as a full facelift and will not address the entire face.

- Typically used to improve the appearance of the lower face and neck, specifically to address sagging skin, wrinkles, and jowls
- Involves making small incisions along the hairline near the temples and/or in front of the ears

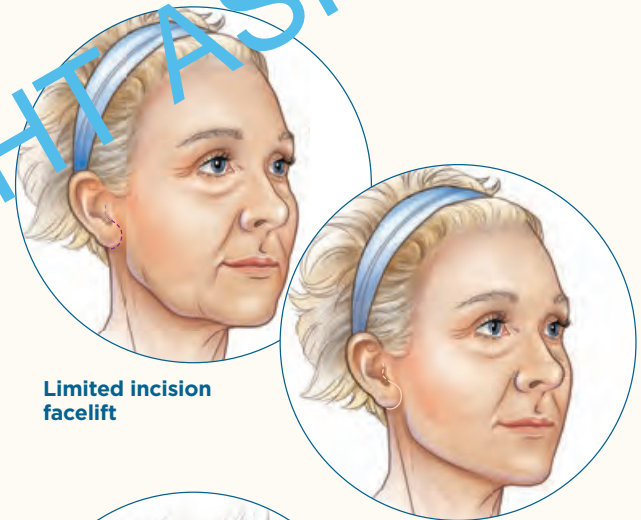
A **neck lift**, also known as a “lower rhytidectomy,” is a surgical procedure that aims to improve the appearance of the neck by tightening and repositioning the skin and underlying tissues. The procedure typically involves making incisions that begin in front of the ear lobe, wrap around behind the ear, and end in the lower scalp.

Step 3 – Closing the incisions

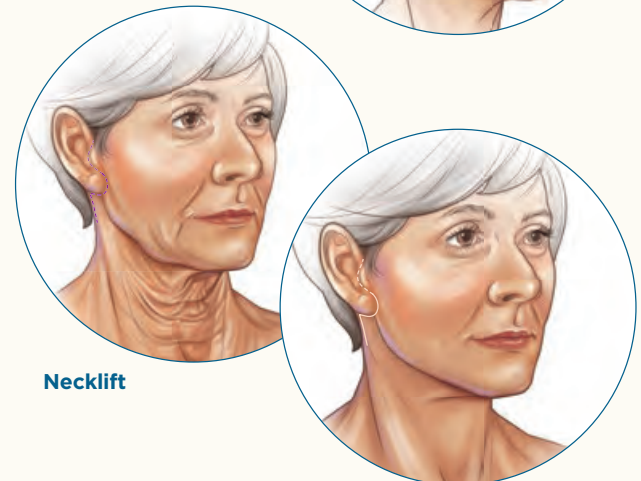
Once healed, the incision lines from a facelift are well concealed within the hairline and in the natural contours of the face and ear. Sutures or skin adhesives close the incisions.



Traditional facelift



Limited incision facelift



Necklift

Risks & Safety

The choice to undergo facelift surgery is a highly individual one requiring consideration of whether the potential benefits align with your desired outcomes, and if the associated risks and complications are acceptable. Your surgeon will discuss the specific risks related to your procedure with you.

Before the procedure, you may be asked to sign informed consent forms to confirm that you have a thorough understanding of the procedure and any potential risks and complications. It is important to ask any questions you may have to fully understand these risks.



Risks can include:

- Anesthesia risks
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Poor wound healing and skin loss
- Facial nerve injury with weakness
- Temporary or permanent hair loss at the incisions
- Fluid accumulation
- Numbness or other changes in skin sensation
- Persistent pain
- Prolonged swelling
- Skin irregularities and discoloration
- Asymmetry, unsatisfactory surgical scar location and visible deformities at the ends of the incisions
- Sutures may spontaneously surface through the skin, become visible or produce irritation that require removal
- Deep vein thrombosis, cardiac, and pulmonary complications

All risks will be fully discussed prior to your consent. It is important that you address all your questions directly with your plastic surgeon.

Other important considerations:

Facelift surgery is not guaranteed to last a lifetime. In some situations, it may not be possible to achieve optimal results with a single surgical procedure and another surgery may be necessary.

Recovery & Results

At the end of your procedure, a bandage may be applied to reduce swelling and bruising. Drainage tubes may also be inserted to remove any extra blood or fluid that may have accumulated beneath the skin.

You will be given specific instructions that may include:

- How to care for the surgical site and drains
- Medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the potential for infection
- Specific concerns to look for at the surgical site or in your general health
- When to follow up with your plastic surgeon

Be sure to ask your plastic surgeon specific questions about what you can expect during your individual recovery period.

- Where will I be taken after my surgery is complete?
- What medication will I be given or prescribed after surgery?
- Will I have dressings/bandages after surgery?
- When will they be removed?
- When can I wear makeup?
- When can I resume normal activity and exercise?
- When can I see my stylist for hair color and cut?

When you go home:

In the case of shortness of breath, chest pain, or irregular heartbeats, seek medical attention immediately. These symptoms may indicate a need for hospitalization and further treatment.

To ensure the success of your surgery, it is crucial to follow your physician's instructions. Avoid applying excessive force, friction, or movement to the surgical incisions while they are healing and do not wear clothing that needs to be pulled over your head.

Recovery Period	What to expect
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor pain, swelling, and bruising• Significantly limit your activity
Weeks 2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return to work (depending on your job)• Limit exercise and activities
Weeks 4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruising should be gone• Swelling should start to subside
Week 6+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued improvement in swelling• May start to gradually increase activity and do gentle exercise

It can take several months for the swelling to completely subside and the incision lines to fully heal. As the swelling and bruising dissipate, you will see the visible improvements from the facelift.

To prolong the results of your youthful appearance, it's important to follow a healthy lifestyle and protect your skin from the sun.

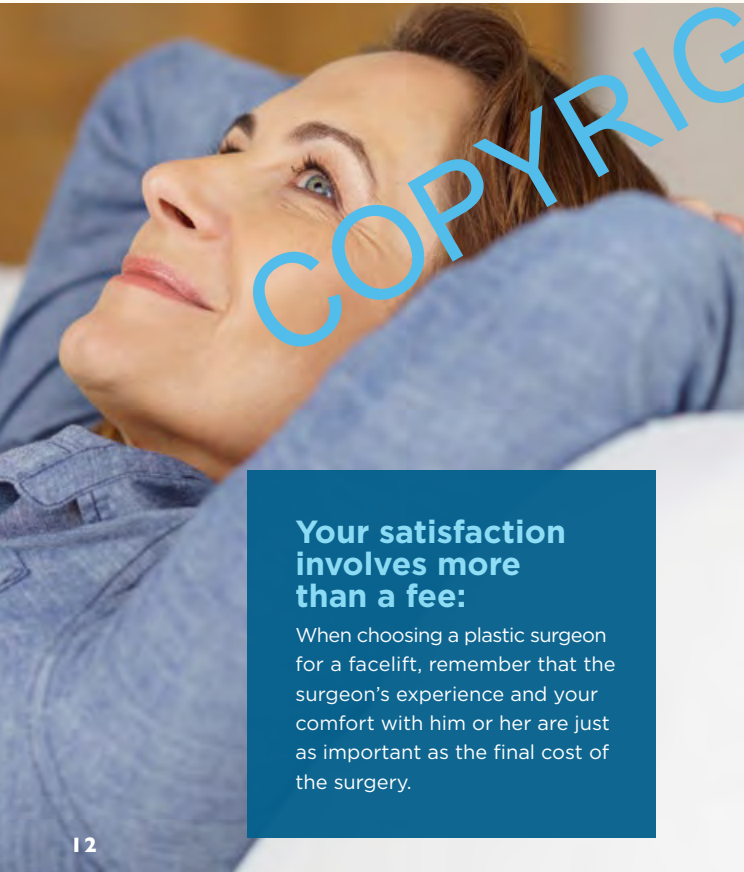
Cost

Pricing for a facelift can vary. A surgeon's cost may be based on his or her experience, the type of procedure used, and geographic office location.

Cost may include:

- Anesthesia fees
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Medical tests
- Post-surgery garments
- Prescriptions for medication
- Surgeon's fee

Most health insurance plans do not cover facelift surgery, as it is considered cosmetic surgery. Please ask your surgeon for a complete picture of the costs you can expect for your facelift. Many plastic surgeons offer patient financing plans.



Your satisfaction involves more than a fee:

When choosing a plastic surgeon for a facelift, remember that the surgeon's experience and your comfort with him or her are just as important as the final cost of the surgery.

Words to know

- **General anesthesia:** Drugs and/or gases used during an operation to relieve pain and alter consciousness.
- **Hematoma:** Blood pooling beneath the skin.
- **Intravenous sedation:** Sedatives administered by injection into a vein to help you relax.
- **Tear trough:** Deep creases below the lower eyelids.
- **Nasolabial fold:** Deep creases between the nose and cheek.
- **Jowls:** A jaw line that sags into the neck, usually caused by loss of muscle tone in the lower face.
- **Local anesthesia:** A drug injected directly to the site of an incision during an operation to relieve pain.
- **Rhytidectomy:** A surgical procedure also known as facelift to reduce sagging of the mid-face, jowls and neck.

Questions to ask my plastic surgeon

- ☐ Are you certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery?
- ☐ Are you a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons?
- ☐ Were you trained specifically in the field of plastic surgery?
- ☐ How many years of plastic surgery training have you had?
- ☐ Do you have hospital privileges to perform this procedure? If so, at which hospitals?
- ☐ Is the office-based surgical facility accredited by a nationally- or state-recognized accrediting agency, or is it state-licensed or Medicare-certified?
- ☐ Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
- ☐ What will be expected of me to get the best results?
- ☐ Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- ☐ What surgical technique is recommended for me?
- ☐ How long of a recovery period can I expect, and what kind of help will I need during my recovery?
- ☐ What are the risks and complications associated with my procedure?
- ☐ How are complications handled?
- ☐ What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the outcome?
- ☐ Do you have before and after photos I can look at for this procedure and what results are reasonable for me?

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Make the Right Choice

Plastic surgery involves many choices. The first and most important is selecting a member of the **American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)**.

ASPS member surgeons meet rigorous standards:

- Board certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS)® or in Canada by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada*
- Complete at least six years of surgical training following medical school with a minimum of three years of plastic surgery residency training
- Pass comprehensive oral and written exams
- Graduate from an accredited medical school
- Complete continuing medical education, including patient safety each year
- Perform surgery in accredited, state-licensed, or Medicare-certified surgical facilities

Do not be confused by other official-sounding boards and certifications.

The ABPS is recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which has approved medical specialty boards since 1934. There is no ABMS-recognized certifying board with “cosmetic surgery” in its name. By choosing a member of The American Society of Plastic Surgeons, you can be assured that you are choosing a qualified, highly trained plastic surgeon who is board certified by the ABPS or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.



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