

FACELIFT

Rhytidectomy

This brochure will familiarize you with some basic facts about facelift surgery. It will give you enough general background to make you an educated consumer about facelift surgery. Your facial plastic surgeon will explain how this procedure applies to an individual's condition.

COMMON PROBLEMS

Over the years, the skin of the face and neck loosens. Gradually, we begin to see wrinkling around the eyelids, on the forehead and on the sides of the mouth. Pouches develop along the jawline and sometimes create a "double chin." In women especially, extra folds form over the front part of the neck. Some faces also become etched with numerous fine wrinkles.

These changes are the result of the aging process, heredity, and gravity. They are accelerated by skin abuse, overexposure to the sun, alcohol, smoking, and poor nutrition.

Fortunately, cosmetic facial surgery can minimize many of these problems.

SOME SOLUTIONS

The operation designed to diminish the changes of the aging face and neck is called a rhytidectomy and is commonly referred to as the facelift operation. The term "facelift" is really a misnomer because the operation combines lifting of the face, neck, and temple regions all in one procedure. In some patients, a submental lipectomy may be performed in conjunction with the facelift to remove excessive fat or folds under the chin. These procedures also can be combined with plastic surgery of the eyelids and forehead, which is discussed in a separate brochure.

DECIDING ON AN OPERATION

Anyone interested in facelift surgery should consult a competent facial plastic surgeon. During the initial visit, the surgeon makes a thorough evaluation of the face and neck to determine whether surgery is indicated. He will then discuss any questions and concerns related to the surgery.

In addition to the skill of the surgeon, the patient's realistic expectations about the results of the surgery and his general emotional state are important considerations. Mental attitude is as important as the ability to heal in evaluating candidates for facial plastic surgery.

Once surgery is agreed upon, pre-operative photographs are taken to help the surgeon plan the operation. These photographs usually are compared with similar ones taken sometime after surgery and serve as a permanent before-and-after record of the results.

HOW A FACELIFT IS DONE

The incision for the facelift operation begins in the temple hair above and in front of the ear. It extends down just in front of the ear, around the ear lobe, up behind the ear, and then backward into the hair of the scalp. Through this incision, the skin is elevated out into the temples, cheeks and neck. The underlying platysma muscle and connective tissues are repositioned to lend some permanency to the realignment of the facial structures. Excess skin is then removed. Sometimes, fat is removed and, occasionally, a small incision is made under the chin to help with the correction. The skin edges are secured with appropriate suture material.

The facelift operation usually takes between two and four hours. When it is completed, a bulky dressing is applied and the patient is transferred to a recovery area.

WHERE SURGERY IS PERFORMED

The facelift operation can be performed in a hospital, an ambulatory surgical care center or an office surgery center, depending on the patient's and the physician's preference. It can be performed safely on an out-patient basis, but the physician may recommend a short stay in the hospital.

KEEPING THE PATIENT COMFORTABLE

Pre-operative medications to relieve tension and local anesthetics to numb the face during surgery commonly are administered. These should keep the patient comfortable and free of pain. If desired, general anesthesia can be administered.

THE IMMEDIATE AFTER-EFFECTS

After the operation, some swelling and bruising can be expected. The swelling usually subsides within the first few days, and the bruising subsides within several weeks. There may be mild discomfort for a short time after surgery, but this usually is controlled easily with medication. Significant pain is quite rare. Sutures are removed in a few days, and makeup can be applied shortly thereafter.

THE RESULTS TO EXPECT

The elimination of excessive sagging of the skin of the face and neck should give the patient a more rested and youthful appearance. Just how much improvement will be made depends on the individual's physical characteristics and the extent of the surgery.

THE RISKS

The risks are minimal. There are inherent risks in any surgical undertaking, however, and these should be discussed thoroughly with your facial plastic surgeon. Many thousands of facelift operations are performed successfully each year.

THE COSTS

Fees for cosmetic surgery and operative facilities vary widely and depend on the extent and complexity of the surgery, as well as on the individual surgeon. Your facial plastic surgeon and his staff will discuss costs before the operation. Fees for cosmetic surgery generally are expected in advance because this type of surgery usually is not covered by insurance. The best way to find out if an insurance company will consider a claim is to consult an insurance company

representative in advance of the operation.

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The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS), is the world's largest association of facial plastic surgeons-those physicians performing cosmetic and reconstructive surgery of the face, head, and neck. The Academy's bylaws provide that AAFPRS fellows be board-certified surgeons with training and experience in facial plastic surgery and be fellows of the American College of Surgeons or the Royal college of Surgeons.

Persons contemplating facial plastic surgery can receive information about such surgery and the name of AAFPRS fellows in their area who have chosen to participate in the Facial Plastic Surgery Information Service, Inc, by calling that service at 800-332-FACE (in the U.S.), 800-523-FACE (in Canada), 842-4500 (in Washington, D.C).
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