

Facelift

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What is a facelift?

A facelift is an operation to tighten and lift the soft tissues of your face and neck.

Is a facelift suitable for me?

As you get older, a number of factors cause the skin and soft tissues of your face to sag, making you look older.

A facelift will reduce the signs of ageing in your face and neck.

You are most likely to benefit from a facelift if you have one or more of the following signs of ageing.

- You have deeper folds in your skin on the sides of your nose and mouth.
- Your cheeks have begun to sag.
- You have developed a double chin or folds in the skin of your neck.

Your surgeon will carry out a detailed assessment before advising you if surgery is suitable for you.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your face should look less tired and younger. Most people who have a successful facelift are more comfortable with their appearance.

Are there any alternatives to a facelift?

Your surgeon may be able to assess you for resurfacing or injecting Botox to smooth out fine wrinkles. Deeper wrinkles can sometimes be filled out using fillers, fat injections or implants.

Fat grafting involves injecting fat from other areas of your body into your face to make your face look more full.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is performed under a general anaesthetic and usually takes 3 to 5 hours.

SMAS facelift

Your surgeon will need to make a cut on both sides of your face.

They will separate your skin from the underlying SMAS layer in the area of your cheeks and neck. Your surgeon may cut under the SMAS layer or use stitches, lifting it upwards and tightening it.

Your surgeon will tighten your skin upwards and backwards towards your ears and remove any excess skin.

MACS facelift

This is a variation of the SMAS facelift, where your surgeon tightens the SMAS layer with suspension stitches to avoid cutting underneath it. A MACS facelift may involve less surgery but the results may not last as long as it does not involve tightening the tissues in your neck.

Other types of facelift

These include the mid-facelift and composite facelift and involve lifting deeper layers of the face.

A thread facelift uses stitches to lift sagging tissue. However, this is only suitable for some people and the effects may last less than a year.

How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke or use nicotine products, stopping smoking at least 6 weeks before and for 6 weeks after surgery may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

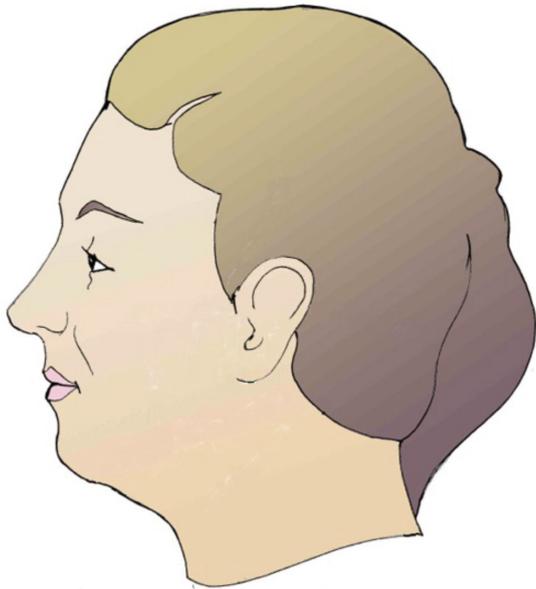
Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

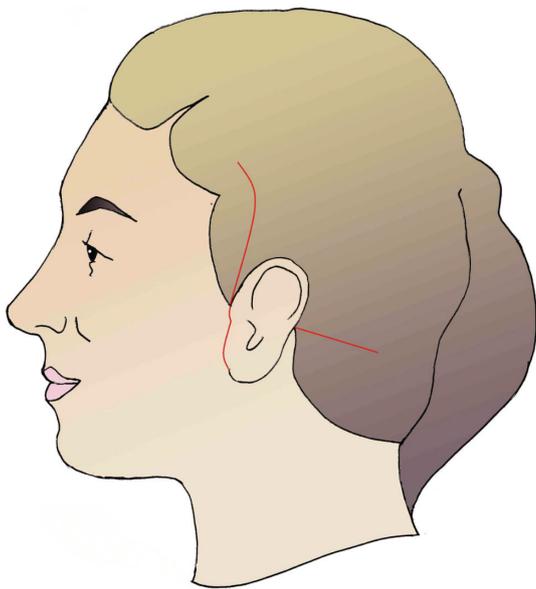
Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

What complications can happen?

Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.



Sagging soft tissues



Reduced signs of ageing

General complications of any operation

- Minor infection on the surface of your wounds
- Bleeding during or soon after the operation
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Venous thromboembolism (VTE). This is a blood clot in your leg (deep-vein thrombosis – DVT) or one that has moved to your lung (pulmonary embolus)
- Chest infection.

Specific complications of this operation

- Loss of skin near the scars
- Hair loss
- Developing a collection of blood or fluid under your skin
- Developing pale areas on your face
- Darkening in the colour of your face
- Damage to nerves
- Cosmetic problems

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain
- Unsightly scarring of your skin

Illustrator

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How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

You should be able to return to normal activities after 2 to 3 weeks.

You should be able to return to work after 3 to 4 weeks, depending on your type of work.

Do not have sex or bend down for at least 2 weeks.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team for advice.

The results of a facelift can last for a long time but that cannot be guaranteed. Your face will still continue to age but should always appear younger than if you had not had surgery.

Summary

A facelift is an operation to make your face appear younger. You should consider the options carefully and have realistic expectations about the results.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

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Acknowledgements

Reviewer

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