



## *facelift* (rhytidectomy)

A fairly common operation, the facelift, technically known as rhytidectomy, is chosen by women or men because they want to look younger. Some people suffer from premature aging for various reasons such as genetics, or too much lying in the sun; their facial muscles become slacker and the skin on the face becomes looser, creating folds and wrinkles.



The facelift procedure makes the face tighter and smoother by lifting up the facial skin and tissues and/or the underlying muscle. Results depend on the type of face, skin quality, and elasticity.



### *about facelift*

The facelift procedure removes excess skin, resulting in partial smoothing of some wrinkles. However, it is important to know that wrinkles such as permanent perpendicular lines on the upper and lower lips, and the forehead are not removed with this procedure. A facelift will not make you look 17 again! Also, keep in mind that such an operation cannot stop the aging process, but it can postpone its symptoms by several years.



The first facelifts were performed more than one hundred years ago and began as simple excisions of small amounts of skin near the ears and along hairlines to tighten loose facial skin.



However, in the past decades, cosmetic surgery has experienced a real boom, with new, safer techniques developed for patient satisfaction. Today, facelifts can restore and rejuvenate the face and produce a more long lasting, youthful and natural appearance with fewer signs that surgery has been performed.

### *your consultation*

Communicating with your surgeon is vital for the success of the procedure. During your consultation he will evaluate your expectations and will take a full history of your health in order to determine if this is the right procedure for you. Then, he will talk to you about the results you can realistically expect.

Related procedures to rejuvenate other areas of the face are frequently performed in conjunction with facelifts, including forehead lifts, neck lifts, rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), and blepharoplasty (eye lifts). Your cosmetic surgeon will advise you of the need to have any of these associated procedures.



It is important to know that best results are achieved in people who maintain a stable body weight, have elastic skin and a strong bone structure.

## *preparing for surgery*

If you decide to go ahead with the procedure, Dr. Eleftheriou will perform a full consultation, examining your face and making the necessary preparations. He will also walk you through the steps before your operation. You may be asked to:

- give up smoking two weeks before and two weeks after the procedure to minimize the risk of infection and avoid vein clogging in your legs,
- stop taking anti-inflammatory medicines such as aspirin two weeks before surgery to reduce the risk of excessive bleeding
- stop any vitamins and supplements that might interfere with the blood clotting mechanism.

Normally this operation is performed under “Twilight” anaesthesia (IV sedation) and local anaesthesia. This new and innovative method of anaesthesia for facial cosmetic surgery is also extremely safe compared to the standard general anaesthesia techniques still used today.

Its main advantages are:

- it does not require putting a breathing tube in the throat,
- it does not require a breathing machine
- the recovery is much faster,
- there is much less “hang-over” from anaesthesia,
- and there is much less nausea,
- avoids the risk of deep vein thrombosis.

During twilight anaesthesia a small flexible IV (intravenous) needle is placed into one of the veins of the back of the hand. Through this IV line, relaxing medication is given to make you fall asleep. The beauty of twilight anaesthesia is that during the procedure you are unaware of anything going on and cannot hear anything, yet you are still breathing on your own.

When the procedure is finished, the relaxing medication is discontinued and you begin to wake up and after a couple of hours you can even have a cup of tea. This is a very important aspect of Dr. Eleftheriou’s work and requires a lot of talent and skill from the anaesthetist and the surgeon as a team.



## *your operation*

The operation usually lasts around three to four hours and requires you spend one or two nights in hospital.

Once the anaesthetic has taken effect, your surgeon will perform a surgical cut around your hairline, and round the ear lobes. He may also perform cuts under your chin, if there is a need to lift a sagging jaw line.

As part of the procedure, your skin will then be carefully separated from the underlying muscles of your face, excess fat will be removed and the muscles will be tightened. The skin will then be lifted up, pulled back and any excess will be trimmed off. Stitches will be applied where the cut was initially made.

At the end of a facelift operation, your face is tightly wrapped in bandages that usually come off after about two days. Stitches are removed after 5 to 10 days.

## *recovery*

Recovery is limited by bruising, swelling, and varies depending on the technique used. You will be able to return to work in 1 to 4 weeks and facelifts are typically healed in 4 to 6 months. The complete healing process can last up to 12 months.

For the next couple of days after the surgery you need to:

- keep your head elevated to reduce swelling.
- avoid bending or straining.
- avoid saunas and massage for at least two weeks.
- avoid the sun for a few weeks.
- avoid vigorous activity for four or five weeks.

Painkillers will help relieve any discomfort as the anaesthetic wears off. Before discharge, our carrying medical staff will give you advice about caring for your face, hygiene and bathing.

Often it helps if you apply a cold compress, such as ice on the bruised face. You should not apply ice directly to your skin as it can give you an 'ice burn'.

After you are discharged from the clinic, you need to rest for 3 to 4 days following the surgery. The bandages are removed on the 2nd day after the operation.

Our professional medical staff will inform you about facial or eyelid swelling as common side effects. Feelings of tension and sensitivity disturbances are fairly



common, but they normally disappear in a couple of weeks.

After the bandages are removed, hair should be washed and you will be able to shower regularly. We recommend wearing a scarf at night to protect the face.

## *risks and complications*

A facelift is generally a safe surgical procedure. However, our caring medical staff will take time to walk you through some common side-effects and risks that you take when deciding to go through with the procedure:

Your face will feel swollen, bruised and sore and it can take a few weeks for these symptoms to subside. The scars usually fade over the course of 12 months, but do not completely disappear. The doctor will advise you about the raised hairline behind and in front of your ear. You must remember that side-effects are temporary. Complications such as bleeding during or soon after the procedure, infection and a reaction to the anaesthetic may occur.

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Although in rare cases, bleeding under your skin may occur that causes a painful haematoma. Antibiotics will be prescribed to prevent infection and your surgeon will remove the blood clot formed. Damage to your facial nerves resulting in numbness and muscle weakness in your face are very uncommon and not necessarily permanent. Do not be alarmed if temporary hair loss around the incision occurs.