

Rhytidectomy or Facelift Surgery

Rhytidectomy or Facelift surgery (surgical removal of wrinkles) is a cosmetic procedure used to give a more youthful appearance. It usually involves the removal of excess facial skin, with or without the tightening of underlying tissues, and the redraping of the skin on the patient's face and neck.

Candidates

Patients who are interested in having a full facelift tend to be in their early 40s or older. As we age, the skin begins to lose elasticity and 'sag', hence lines, wrinkles and extra folds of skin appear. Smoking, weight loss and sun exposure can also contribute to these factors. A full facelift can create a smoother, firmer surface across the skin, helping the patient to appear more youthful.

Procedure

There are varying procedures that can be performed to achieve a full facelift. Usually the patient will be placed under a general anesthetic, and an incision made along the hairline and around the ears. If individuals are prone to sagging skin around the chin, then an incision may be made in this area as well. Skin is separated from the muscles, which are then tightened. Excess fat and skin is removed and pulled back into place, creating a 'tighter' appearance. The incisions are then sewn up and wrapped in bandages. Plastic tubes may be left in the incisions to drain excess fluid, but should be removed a couple of days after the operation. Other procedures – both surgical and non-surgical – may be used to achieve a smoother, more youthful appearance, including keyhole surgery, minimal-access cranial suspension, botox and thread lifts.

Recovery period

Patients will be required to stay overnight following full facelift surgery, and take up to two weeks off work. Bandages will be removed shortly after the procedure and it is normal to see bruising and swelling, but this will begin to subside over the course of several weeks. Painkillers can be taken to ease the pain. Sutures will be removed after a few days, but your surgeon will make a decision based on the individual's requirement. It is important to avoid strenuous activity for several weeks.

Risks

Full facelift surgery is a very common procedure and complications are rare, but can happen. This includes prominent, red scars, bleeding under the skin, infection, hair loss surrounding the scars, nerve damage, numbness, asymmetrical features and blood clotting.