



Spire Healthcare

Treatment summary

Facelift operation including brow and neck lift

What is a facelift?

As we age, our facial muscles become slacker and the skin on the face becomes looser and less elastic, creating folds and lines. A facelift is a cosmetic operation to leave the face tighter and smoother.

Sometimes other procedures are carried out at the same time including surgery to:

- correct droopy eyelids (blepharoplasty)
- lift the level of your eyebrows (brow lift)
- tighten the skin in the neck (neck lift)

These procedures can also be carried out as separate operations. For more information on blepharoplasty please see the separate Spire Healthcare treatment summary sheet, Cosmetic eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty).

It is important to discuss with your surgeon what you are hoping to gain from your operation, and the results you can realistically expect. It is also important that you complete any weight loss programme before the operation.

A facelift typically requires one or two nights' stay in hospital and is usually done under general anaesthesia. This means that you will be asleep during the procedure and will feel no pain. Brow lift and neck lift, where they are performed as separate operations, are also done under general anaesthesia and usually require a one night stay.

Your surgeon will explain how you can expect to look after your facelift, neck or brow lift and will discuss the associated risks and any alternatives to the operation.

About the operation

There are a number of different facelift, brow and neck lift techniques. Your surgeon will explain the options available to you.

For a typical facelift, your surgeon will make a surgical cut right around your hairline, past the front of your ears. Cuts may also be made under your chin, if the operation includes lifting a sagging jaw line.

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. It will then be stitched back to the line where the cut was initially made.

At the end of a facelift operation, your face is tightly wrapped in bandages. Depending on the exact procedure carried out, these may run under your chin, around your ears and/or over your head. They are usually taken off after about one or two days.

After the operation there is normally some swelling, bruising and soreness.

Other techniques

Sometimes your surgeon will use keyhole (endoscopic) surgery, particularly for a brow lift. Several tiny cuts are made that allow an endoscope (a small, flexible tube with a light and a camera lens at the end) to be placed under the skin. The operating instruments are inserted through other tiny holes. Your surgeon can see what he or she is doing under the skin by watching a TV monitor.

Another type of facelift surgery is minimal access cranial suspension (MACS). Shorter cuts, compared to a traditional facelift, are made in the temple and in front of the ears. Fibrous tissues under the skin are tightened with permanent stitches that are fixed to tissue close to the cheekbone or the fibrous connective tissue under the skin.

Both endoscopic facelift and MACS have the advantages of smaller scars and usually a shorter recovery time.

Depending on the exact type of procedure you are having, face, neck and brow lift operations can take about three to four hours.

Face, neck and brow lifts are commonly performed and generally safe operations. However, all surgery carries an element of risk.

Occasionally, bleeding occurs under the skin causing it to swell and become painful. This is called a haematoma. Rarely, you need to return to theatre to stop the bleeding. Facial nerves that run from the ear across to the muscles of the face may be damaged during surgery, which can cause numbness and muscle weakness in your face. This may get better on its own, but occasionally it can be permanent.

Another possible complication is that the wound can be slow to heal. Scars usually fade over the course of a year, but they won't disappear completely.

As with any cosmetic procedure it is important that you review your expectations thoroughly with your surgeon before you decide to proceed.

The chance of complications depends on the exact type of operation you are having and other factors such as your general health. Ask your surgeon to explain how any risks apply to you.

To find out more about having face, brow or neck lift in a Spire Healthcare hospital, please contact your local Spire hospital.



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