



PATIENT INFORMATION

Facelift Surgery

OVERVIEW

Facelift surgery involves re-supporting the soft tissues of the face, jawline and neck. It involves an incision starting in the temple hairline, passing down just in front of the ear, curling around the lower part of the ear and ending in the hairline behind the ear. As compared to previous surgical methods, only a small amount of skin is removed to minimise the “operated on” look.

*The following information sheet has been created by Assoc. Prof White as a general guide to assist his patients and is intended to provide a broad overview of the important considerations related to the decision to have **facelift surgery**.*

The specific nature of the surgery will vary between individuals and is dependent on the unique circumstances of each person.

You are encouraged to further discuss this information along with any specific questions or concerns with Assoc. Prof White during your consultation.

COMMON REASONS WHY PEOPLE CONSIDER HAVING FACELIFT SURGERY

With the normal aging process the soft tissues and skin of the face sag and lose volume. Some people feel that this makes them look tired or old.

This surgery aims to improve the facial contours and restore definition to the cheeks, jawline and neck.

Facelift surgery does not remove facial wrinkles - these may be more effectively dealt with by fillers (if deep) or anti-wrinkle injections e.g. crows feet.

Most people considering this surgery have a desire to take away the signs of aging but not look “operated on” or “like a different person”.

WHAT IS INVOLVED WITH FACELIFT SURGERY?

- General anaesthetic
- Surgery Duration: Usually about four to five hours of operating time
- Drain tubes and bulky dressings are applied.

RECOVERY AFTER SURGERY

- Patients most commonly require a hospital stay of one - two nights.
- The drain tubes are generally removed the next day.
- The facial area may be a little bit bruised for a few days. This can be covered with makeup and is largely resolved at two weeks.
- Gentle increasing mobilisation and activity and generally back to most normal day to day activities within a week.
- Social interaction in public can often occur by about two weeks.
- At three weeks most people can return to work.
- Able to drive when feeling comfortable.
- No heavy lifting/exercise for two weeks e.g. avoid gym, aerobics, running.
- Numbness in the face (cheeks, ears, neck) can last for several weeks.

POST OPERATIVE CARE & REVIEW

Mr White will see you in hospital after your surgery and/or prior to your discharge from hospital.

Post operative visits with Assoc. Prof White

1. Approximately one week after surgery - At this stage Assoc. Prof White will make sure that you are well and the wounds are healing nicely.
2. Six weeks post surgery review – At this time you will have a better idea of what the final result from surgery will be like.
3. Four - Six months post surgery.
4. 12 months.

If there are any concerns you will be seen more frequently.



FACELIFT SURGERY

SURGICAL GOALS

1. YOUR SAFETY
2. Address the sagging of the soft tissues by mobilising and securing them in a higher position
3. Removing a small amount of skin
4. Minimising the chance of a “windswept” or “operated on” face.

BEFORE DECIDING TO HAVE FACELIFT SURGERY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

- **If you a smoker: STOP Smoking**
- You should have a generally good level of fitness and health
- You may need to have other surgery to balance the result e.g. eyelids (blepharoplasty)
- Facelift surgery resets or restores facial features but does not halt the ongoing aging process.

ALTERNATIVES TO SURGERY

- No surgery or delaying surgery
- In some cases resurfacing procedures may be appropriate e.g. laser
- Non surgical interventions such as fillers or anti-wrinkle injections.

RISKS TO CONSIDER

Anaesthetic - In otherwise well people, general anaesthesia is very safe with modern techniques. Assoc. Prof White’s rooms will give you the details of your anaesthetist prior to surgery to discuss any specific concerns.

Bleeding/Haematoma – This may need a return to the operating theatre to evacuate a blood clot. This can impact on wound healing or skin survival.

Infection in the wound – If this does occur, it is usually cleared up with antibiotic tablets. Wound infection is uncommon in facelift surgery.

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RISKS TO CONSIDER (cont.)

DVT/PE (Deep venous thrombosis/pulmonary embolus) - Blood clots that are potentially very serious and even life threatening which can form in the legs and travel to the lungs. Multiple strategies are employed to minimise the risk of these occurring.

Scars - Typically are at their thickest and reddest at 6-10 weeks after surgery. Scars continue to mature and improve for up to 18 months after surgery. Scar management advice will be discussed in your follow up visit with Assoc. Prof White to assist in achieving the goal of a thin, barely noticeable scar. (Note: any resulting scar is designed to be largely hidden in the creases just in front of your ear and in the hairline.)

Hair loss - Uncommonly some hair can be lost in the region of the scars.

Asymmetry - The scars may be slightly different on your right compared to left side or the result can slightly differ between the two sides.

Wound separation/delayed healing - This is much more common in smokers or if there is an infection. There may even be a loss of skin requiring prolonged dressings or even more surgery.

Facial nerve damage - Uncommonly there is some stretching or damage to the facial nerve. This causes some weakness of the muscles that move your face. This is generally temporary and recovers by itself. Very rarely this may be permanent.

NO SURGERY IS RISK FREE

All surgery is a balance between realistic surgical goals and knowledge of possible risks and complications. Risks are minimised by careful patient selection and planning, high standards of surgical training, meticulous surgical technique and vigilant post operative care. Small, less serious issues are common and every effort is made to resolve them quickly. These very rarely have any long-term effect on an excellent final result.