

# RHYTIDECTOMY

(also known as Face Lift)



This information sheet provides general information to a person having a Rhytidectomy Surgery. It does not provide advice to the individual. It is important that the content is discussed between you and your doctor who understands your level of fitness and your medical condition.

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## What is rhytidectomy (or face lift)?

A face lift, or rhytidectomy, is a surgical procedure used to reduce facial wrinkles, eliminate telltale signs of aging, and improve the overall appearance of the face and jaw area.

## When is it required?

If you have any or some of the underlying conditions, you may want to consider the option.

- A deep line, or fold, running from the corner of your nose to the corner of your mouth.
- Loss of a well-defined jaw line or jowls associated with youthfulness.
- Sagging of the "highlight" areas of the cheekbones as well as deep wrinkles in the cheeks.
- Loose skin, wrinkles, vertical "cords" or excess fatty tissue in the neck.

A facelift can be a solution to all of these problems. However, conditions like sagging eyebrows, excess skin and fatty deposits in the upper and lower eyelids or wrinkles around the mouth cannot be rectified by this surgery. Further information can be provided by your plastic surgeon if you have an interest in other procedures to treat these areas.

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## Who is the best candidate for a face lift?

The best candidate for a facelift is a man or woman whose face and neck have begun to sag, but whose skin still has some elasticity and whose bone structure is strong and well-defined. Most patients are in their forties to sixties, but facelifts can be done successfully on people in their seventies or eighties as well.

A facelift can make you look younger and fresher, and it may enhance your self-confidence in the process. But it can't give you a totally different look, nor can it restore the health and vitality of your youth. Before you decide to have surgery, think carefully about your expectations and discuss them with your surgeon.

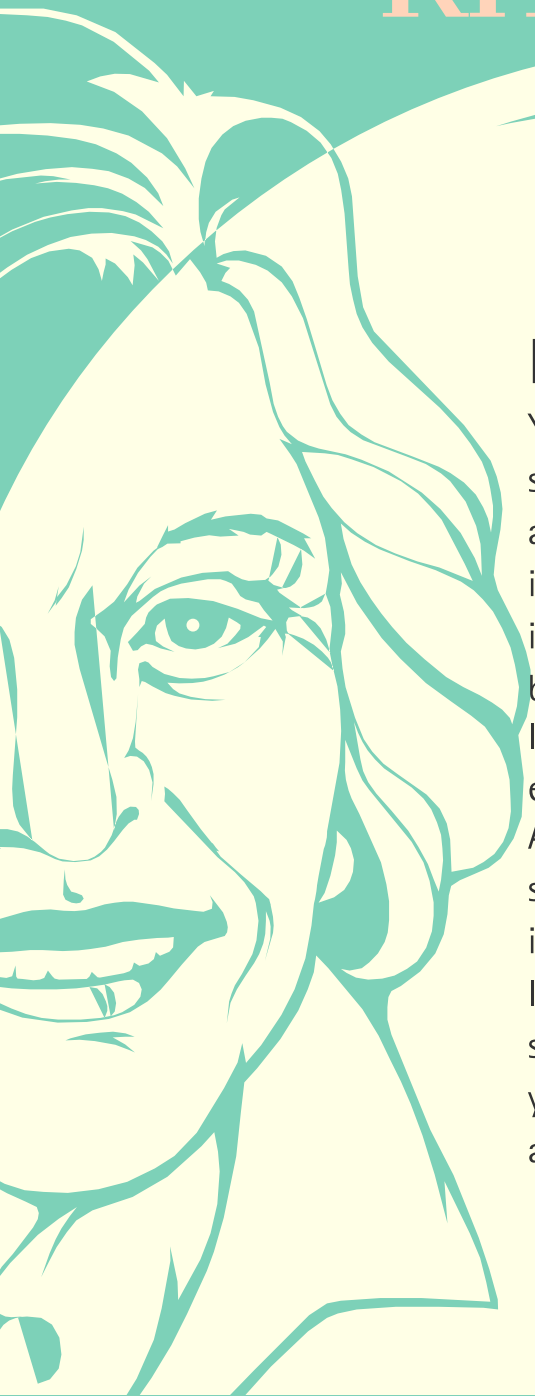
## What will happen at the individual consultation?

During the consultation, you and your surgeon will discuss the changes that you would like to make in your appearance. He/she will explain the different options available to you, the procedure itself, and its risks and limitations. He/she will also explain the kind of anesthesia required, surgical facility, and costs.



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## How do I prepare for the procedure?

Your surgeon will give you specific instructions on how to prepare for surgery, including guidelines on eating and drinking, smoking, and taking or avoiding certain vitamins and medications. Carefully following these instructions will help your surgery go more smoothly. If you smoke, it's especially important to stop at least a week or two before and after surgery; smoking inhibits blood flow to the skin, and can interfere with the healing of your incision areas.

If your hair is very short, you might want to let it grow out before surgery, so that it's long enough to hide the scars while they heal.

Aspirin and Vitamin E containing medications must be avoided at least 7 days prior to your surgery. Specific instructions on this will be given by your surgeon. Carefully following these instructions will help your surgery go more smoothly. Eyelid surgery is can be performed under local anesthesia--which numbs the area around your eyes--along with oral or intravenous sedatives. You'll be awake during the surgery, but relaxed and insensitive to pain. (However, you may feel some tugging or occasional discomfort.) Some surgeons prefer to use general anesthesia; in that case, you'll sleep through the operation.



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## Will it hurt?

Facelift is usually performed under general anesthesia and you will sleep through the procedure feeling no pain. Some surgeons may perform under local anesthesia with sedation.

## What happens during the procedure?

The incision for your facelift usually begins in the hair near the temple and continues in front of the ear, around the ear lobe, behind the ear and into the hair. The muscles and sagging tissue are tightened, excess skin is removed, and the remaining skin is repositioned to create a more youthful look. The surgeon will close the incision with stitches, or with metal clips on the scalp. If the neck needs lifting, a small incision may be made under the chin.

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## What happens after the procedure?

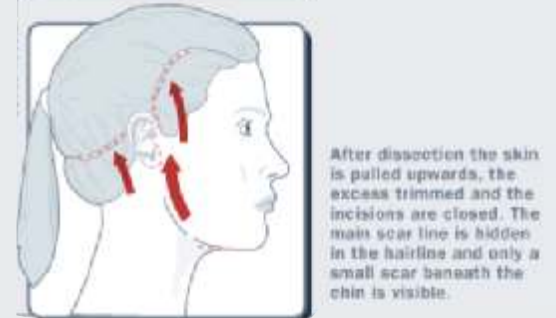
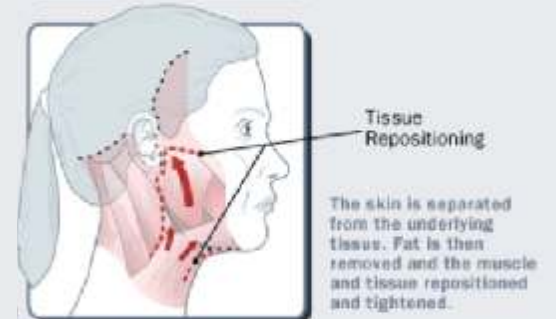
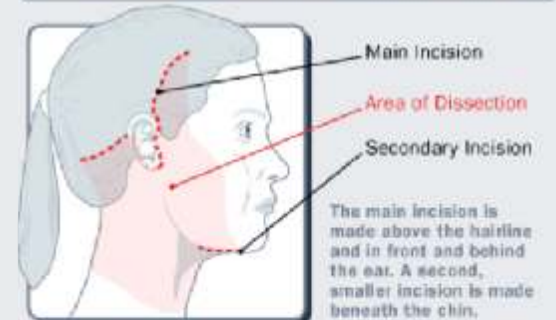
There isn't usually significant discomfort after surgery; if there is, it can be lessened with the pain medication prescribed by your surgeon. (Severe or persistent pain or a sudden swelling of your face should be reported to your surgeon immediately.) Some numbness of the skin is quite normal; it will disappear in a few weeks or months.

Your doctor may tell you to keep your head elevated and as still as possible for a couple of days after surgery, to keep the swelling down.

If you've had a drainage tube inserted, it will be removed one or two days after surgery. Bandages, when used, are usually removed after one to five days.

Most of your stitches will be removed after about five days. Your scalp may take longer to heal, and the stitches or metal clips in your hairline could be left in a few days longer.

### How Facelifts Work: Basic Procedure



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## What are the benefits of this procedure?

While a facelift cannot stop the aging process, it can often make a person appear to many years younger than their actual age.

After the surgery contact your Doctor if:

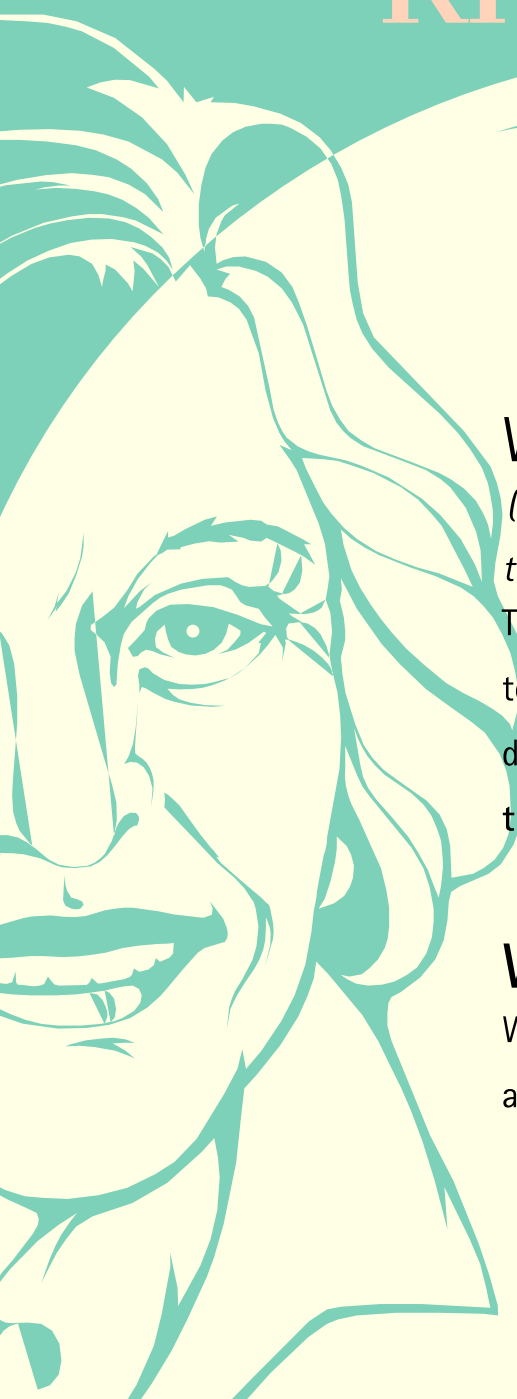
- You develop a fever over 100° F (37.8° C).
- You have drainage from your incision, or the incision separates.
- You become dizzy or faint.
- You have nausea and vomiting.
- You have chest pain.
- You become short of breath.

## Expectations from the surgery:

Patients can expect a more rested and often youthful appearance. Although a face lift can last for many years, patients continue to age. Therefore, it is impossible to predict how long it might be before an individual would consider a second lift. Some believe that a facelift also helps prevent the skin from sagging again by holding it tighter to the face. The results of a facelift are different for each person. The people who look best after a facelift are those who looked the best before the procedure. Some people have one facelift in a lifetime, while others have a second surgery 7 - 15 years later.



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## What are the alternatives to face lift surgery?

*(Please note that some alternative treatments may not be available or suitable to everyone.)*

They include the contour thread lift, lasers and natural products that firm and tone the skin. A one-on-one consultation with your surgeon will also help determine whether one of these substitutes for face lift can help you achieve the look you desire, or if surgery is necessary.



## What are the risks of the procedure?

While majority of patients have an uneventful surgery and recovery, few cases may be associated with complications. These are seen infrequently and not all the ones listed below

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*Note: The listed risks and complications are not all inclusive.*

- (a) The scar in the hairline may become visible with parting of the hair. The scar behind the ear may be the most noticeable. The scars may become thickened, red and itchy. Small hairless areas can sometimes be found adjacent to the scar but these can usually be hidden with the hair.
- (B) Infection. This is treated with intravenous antibiotics and further drainage procedures. Further surgery may also be required.
- (c) Numbness around the cheeks and sometimes the ears which is usually temporary, six to twelve months
- (d) Damage to the facial nerve. This results in weakness of the facial muscles. This is usually temporary, about six months.
- (e) Bleeding, which can cause a collection of blood under the skin. This may be severe and may cause loss of some of the skin on the face. Further surgery may be needed to drain this and remove the clot as it forms.
- (f) Bruising and swelling, which may cause a blood clot which may need to be surgically removed.
- (G) Increased risk in obese people of wound infection, chest infection, heart and lung complications and thrombosis.
- (h) Increased risk in smokers of wound and chest infections, heart and lung complications and thrombosis.



## OUR FACILITIES:

### Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket

1, Press Enclave Road, Saket, New Delhi-110 017

Ph: 91-11-6611 5050 Fax: 91-11-6611 5077

### Max Devki Devi Heart & Vascular Institute, Saket

2, Press Enclave Road Saket, New Delhi 17

Ph: +91-11-2651 5050 Fax: +91-11-2651 0050

### Max Balaji Hospital™, Patparganj

108 A, Indraprastha Extension Patparganj, New Delhi- 92

Ph: +91-11-4303 3333 Fax: +91-11-2223 5563

### Max Hospital, Gurgaon

Block-B, Sushant Lok-I, Gurgaon

Ph:+91-124 6623 000 Fax: +91-124 6623 111

### Max Hospital™, Pitampura

Near TV Tower, Wazirpur District Centre, Pitampura, New Delhi-34,

Ph: +91-11-2735 1844 Fax: +91-11-2735 7229

### Max Hospital™, Noida

A-364, Sector 19, Noida 201 301

Ph: 95120-254 9999, 253 5500 Fax: 95120-253 5557

### Max Medcentre™, Panchsheel Park

N 110, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi -17

Ph: +91-11-2649 9870 Fax: +91-11-2649 9860

### Max Speciality Clinic (Eye Care & Dental Care)

S 347, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi-48

Ph: +91-11-2649 9870, 2649 9880