



## **Which Facelift is for Me?**

Recently a patient asked me if I do the “S lift.” You may be wondering what is an “S lift”.....? And if you are considering a nip and a tuck in order to treat the age-induced wrinkles and jowls of your face then you may be interested. An “S lift” is a modified version of the standard facelift.

Rhytidectomy or facelifting is a procedure that traces its origins back to Europe in the early 1900’s. Originally, shrouded in secrecy, many of our most famous plastic surgery pioneers performed the procedure in hiding. As a matter of fact rumors has it they hid their instruments so others would not learn their secrets. In the middle of the 20th century the advent of safer anesthesia and improved medical techniques fueled an

increased interest in cosmetic procedures, especially by the Hollywood crowd. Further acceptance was realized with the social renaissance of the 1960’s and 1970’s. Science followed, as more doctors became interested, technical



advancements yielded superior results. Prior to the 1970’s, face-lifting techniques had remained virtually unchanged leaving many people with a tightened “wind blown look.” In 1974 a Scandinavian doctor described a new method of restoring the deeper tissues of the face to their original positions. This allowed for a longer and more natural result. This method has become the platform from which most other face- lifting innovations are initiated. Today facelifts are a common procedure (over 70,000 performed per year, an 82% increase from 1992; National Clearing House on Plastic Surgery 1999 survey) and it has become a relatively routine surgery with predictable and reliable results for the experienced physician. Contrary to stories of the past, most patients experience a minimal recovery period and are back to their routine schedules in two weeks.

As cosmetic surgery has become a competitive and crowded field many doctors are looking to distinguish themselves by developing their own version of the facelift. Additionally, as medicine enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, patients and physicians alike are searching for less invasive, no downtime procedures that will provide the maximum results. Hence some of the reasons behind the multitude of face-lifting procedures: “S” lift, “Weekend facelift”, and “No incision facelift.” “Endoscopic facelift,” “Deep plane face lift.” And even industry is in on it with the infomercial touted electrical stimulating “No surgery facelift.” However, I am quite skeptical of an electronic device’s ability to lift heavy facial tissues and would urge your research into this product before making the investment.

Most of the modified surgical procedures have merit when done appropriately and for the proper indications. Although, it is important your doctor explains to you the benefits and limitations of each procedure. If you desire to undergo the weekend facelift be aware that despite the catchy name, your healing is probably going to take longer than a weekend. However, you can be confident it shouldn’t take as long as the six weeks of healing expected with the deep plane facelift. But you must recognize these are two different procedures with two different outcomes. Your doctor should be able to discuss it in depth with you.

It is appropriate and prudent to ask your physician his philosophy on facelifts, to see before and after pictures and to ask if he/she perform more than one kind of facelift procedure. In the end you must decide on which procedure best fits your needs and a surgeon with whom you are most comfortable.

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