

# facelift update

Sydney plastic surgeon **Dr Jake Lim** explains modern facelifts and their absence of telltale scars. Christine Doggett reports.

**F**acelift procedures have evolved into a safer and more predictable method to rejuvenate the face without the stretched 'done' look of the past. The aim of facelift surgery is to reduce the signs of ageing by improving the contours of the face and neck. 'By removing the excess sagging skin and taking out or repositioning excess fat, the facial skin appears younger and smoother,' Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Jake Lim explains. 'The facial muscles are usually tightened too.'

Facelifts are individualised procedures and their outcomes depend on the age of patients

and their degree of ageing. 'By the time men and women are in their late 40s, the facial skin has lost much of its tone and elasticity,' says Dr Lim. 'With age, the neck and jaw line lose definition and the tissues begin to sag, and wrinkles occur on top of this looseness.'

'Marionette lines create a groove from the corners of the mouth down to the chin to meet with the jowls on the jaw line and deep wrinkles also occur on the cheeks. This all results in an ageing face and for many patients the best improvement can be achieved with a facelift.'

Customised to each patient's individual needs, facelifts can improve otherwise permanent signs of ageing such as sagging jowls and cheeks, loose skin and fat deposits under the chin and neck, and deep creases below the lower eyelids. In a facelift procedure the underlying facial musculature and the platysma encircling the neck are tightened. The excess skin tissues are then excised and sutured into their new position. The stitches secure the layers of tissue and close the incisions.

'For traditional facelifts, incisions begin within the hairline, just above the temple and follow the natural line in front of the ear, curve behind the ear lobe, into the crease behind it and into or along the lower scalp,' Dr Lim explains. 'This allows access to tighten underlying tissue, and to remove excess fat and skin. After surgery there will be some swelling and bruising, which should subside in two or three weeks. Incision lines or scars hidden in the hairline and natural creases of the face and ear will continue to refine and fade over time.'

Until recently, women in their 30s and 40s delayed considering face lifts because they were perceived as grand undertakings that most people plan on having just once in a lifetime. 'The short scar facelift is appropriate for younger women in their 40s or 50s,' Dr Lim says. 'The scarring in the crease behind the ear and in the hairline behind it is largely or completely eliminated, significantly reducing unsightly lines.'

'The short-scar face lift is less invasive and offers a quicker recovery time,' Dr Lim says. 'It is more suitable for patients showing fewer signs of ageing in the neck and lower face. It is most applicable to patients in whom correction of mid-facial ageing is the primary concern. Like traditional lifts, the short-scar procedure is designed to lift the cheek, reduce the jowl, shorten the lower eyelid and soften the nasolabial fold. It is more limited in its ability to provide correction of loose and sagging skin and soft tissue in the neck in comparison to more traditional lifts.'

It is generally appropriate for people who show ageing in the mid-face and do not have a severe amount of excess skin around their jaw line and neck.

'The shorter incisions are much less visible, so the short scar face lift is 'pony-tail friendly' and the result is very natural.' Dr Lim says.

A short-scar facelift cannot stop the ageing process, however it can 'set back the clock', improving the most visible signs of ageing. The procedure can be performed by

itself or in conjunction with other cosmetic surgery. A traditional facelift treats the lower third of the face and neck, so it is not uncommon for patients to combine their facelift procedure with a blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery. A brow lift can also be performed in conjunction with a facelift to reduce heavy lines in the forehead.

Whichever combination of treatments is required by individual patients, it is important they fully discuss their goals and how to achieve them both pre and post operatively with a qualified aesthetic surgeon who they have confidence in and trust. **acsm**



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Lim



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Lim



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Lim