

Facelift Information Sheet

Are you thinking about a Facelift?

If you are considering a facelift Dr. Peterson wants you to be thoroughly informed about the procedure. Reading this brochure is the first step. A personal consultation with your surgeon is the best way to obtain the additional information you will need.

What is a Facelift?

As we get older, the effects of sun damage as well as the natural ageing process leads to loss of elasticity and tightness of the facial skin. Gravity can cause sagging and drooping of the face, especially around the eyes, cheeks, jowls and neck. Skin wrinkling is a result of these factors.

A facelift, also called "rhytidectomy," is an operation designed to correct the effects of ageing in the face. It smoothes the loose skin on your face and neck, tightens underlying tissues and removes excess fat. As a result, your face will appear firmer, fresher and more youthful.

After the operation you should not expect to look a different person, but rather look refreshed, rejuvenated, and perhaps a few years younger.

Is a Facelift for me?

Any of the following conditions may make you a good candidate for facelift surgery:

- A deep line, or fold, running from the corner of your nose to the corner of your mouth
- Jowls, or loss of a well defined jawline associated with youthfulness
- Deep wrinkles in the cheeks and sagging of the "highlight" areas of the cheekbones
- Loose skin, wrinkles, vertical folds or excess fatty tissue in the neck

A facelift can improve all of these problems.

Initial Consultation

During the initial consultation, you will be asked to describe exactly what you would like to see improved. This will help us to understand your

expectations and determine whether they can be realistically achieved. You should always keep in mind that the desired result is improvement, not perfection.

You will be asked about your medical history including previous operations, past and present medical conditions and medications. In order to provide you with the best information and safest options, it is important that you provide your complete information.

Photographs may be taken during your initial consultation and at subsequent visits for the purpose of preoperative planning and documentation. We will discuss with you the details of the operation and the possible risks and complications associated with the procedure.

In assessing you for facelift surgery, Dr. Peterson will examine the thickness, texture and elasticity of your skin, as well as the severity of wrinkles and folds. Your hairline will be examined to determine where incisions can be discreetly placed. All of these factors, as well as your bone structure and underlying tissues, will be considered in developing an individualized surgical plan.

Dr. Peterson may discuss with you additional procedures that can be performed along with a facelift in order to address all the concerns you have identified. For example, a facelift is frequently combined with a forehead/brow lift, eyelid surgery, Botox injections or skin treatments such as laser resurfacing.

Preparation for Surgery

The Athena Clinic would like to make your surgical experience as easy and comfortable for you as possible. Smokers will be asked to stop smoking before surgery. Aspirin, some anti-inflammatory medications, and some herbs cause increased bleeding, so you should avoid taking these medications for 2 weeks before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

You will have a preoperative visit in the office about two weeks prior to the date of surgery. You will be asked about your medical history including previous operations, past and present medical conditions and medications. In order to provide you with the best information and safest options, it is important that you provide complete information. You may be asked to obtain an EKG prior to your surgery or have medical clearance from your primary care physician before proceeding with the surgery.

At this visit, instructions will be explained about what to do before and after surgery. You will have an opportunity to ask questions about your surgery, sign consent forms, and complete necessary laboratory work.

The operation is performed on an out patient basis, allowing you to leave after the operation is finished and you have recovered sufficiently from the anaesthetic. You will need to arrange to have someone drive you home after surgery and to stay with you at least the first night following surgery.

The day of Surgery

You will arrive at The Athena Clinic and be checked in for surgery. This process takes about one hour. Dr. Peterson will meet with you and answer any last minute questions. He will also make markings on your body with a marker and take more pictures. You will meet with the anaesthetist, who will review your medical history and discuss the anaesthesia with you. During the anaesthetic, various monitors are used to check your heart, blood pressure, pulse and the amount of oxygen circulating in your blood. Your anaesthesia during the procedure is administered and monitored by a certified registered nurse anaesthetist (CRNA) or an anaesthesiologist.

You will then go to our in-office operating suite, which is approved by The Joint Commission. The surgical team will prepare you for the surgery by washing the surgical area. It can be cold in the operating room, however we will provide plenty of blankets and you may want to bring socks. The anaesthetist will begin the intravenous (IV) sedation and administer antibiotics intravenously to minimize

the chance of infection. Dr. Peterson will then begin the surgery once you are comfortable.

Your Operation

Although there are many variations to the facelift operation, incisions are hidden in the hairline of the temple and the natural creases in front of the ear. The incision then curves around the earlobe, behind the ear and is camouflaged in the scalp. After surgery, incisions can be easily concealed by your hair or with makeup. The placements of the incisions will depend on your individual surgery that you discuss with Dr. Peterson. If you are having a brow lift, (also known as coronal lift or forehead lift), the incision will be across your scalp on the top of your head from ear to ear.

Through the concealed incisions, Dr. Peterson is able to free the skin from the underlying tissues to the extent necessary for the particular surgical technique selected. The deeper tissues may be repositioned in order to restore a more youthful contour to your face. The skin is then repositioned up and back and the excess skin is removed. If necessary, a small incision beneath the chin permits the removal of fatty tissue in that area and smoothing of the cord like structures of the underlying muscle in the neck.

How long does the operation take?

The operation takes from 2 to 5 hours, depending on the extent of each case.

After Surgery

When surgery is completed, you will be taken into the recovery room where you will continue to be closely monitored. You will spend about an hour in the recovery room before going home. You will not be discharged to go home until you are no longer very drowsy.

Because the surgical area is infiltrated with long-lasting local anaesthetic, you may have little or no pain when you wake up. As the anaesthetic wears off, some discomfort may be present. We provide a prescription for oral pain medicine to be used after your surgery in case you need it. If you have post-operative pain, it usually diminishes over several days. It is important to realize that the amount of

time it takes for recovery varies greatly among individuals. You will want to bring cloths that are comfortable and easy to put on after surgery.

You will have a surgical bandage applied before you go home. You will continue to wear this until your post-operative appointment with Dr. Peterson the following day. The bandage may be reapplied at the visit and needed to be worn for a few days, or you may no longer need the surgical wrap.

Sutures and staples will be removed at a week or two after surgery during one of your follow-up visits at The Athena Clinic. Do not be alarmed by any unevenness or temporary asymmetry caused by this variance in swelling and bruising, which is normal. It may take several weeks before all puffiness is resolved. Most bruising will disappear within two weeks. You will also experience some numbness in the facial area, which may be present for several weeks or longer.

It is important to realize that recovery time varies greatly among individuals. After surgery you will be asked to restrict your activities and simply relax for a few days. Elevating your head when you sleep will help to minimize swelling and bruising. You will be instructed to continue to avoid aspirin and certain anti-inflammatory medications. You should not smoke or be exposed to passive smoke for several weeks.

When can I resume my normal activities?

Considerable bruising and swelling over the first week or so may be encountered. This can be expected to settle rapidly at least by the second week. Straining, bending and lifting should be avoided during the early postoperative period. After a few days you will be permitted to wear make-up which will help to conceal any discoloration. Generally speaking, you will be confident and happy to engage in social contact 2-3 weeks post-operatively. In many instances you will be able to resume most of your normal activities within two weeks and begin to exercise three to four weeks after surgery. You will be instructed to temporarily avoid exposure to direct sunlight and then continue to be conscientious about the use of a sun block to protect your skin.

How long do results last?

Facelift surgery makes you look more rested, refreshed and alert. Since the healing process is gradual, you should expect to wait at least 6 to 8 weeks to get an accurate picture of the results of your facelift surgery. Incisions will fade over a number of months until they become barely visible.

Depending on the extent of the procedure, the result may last 3, 5 or 7 years and longer. The ageing process continues as gravity and facial atrophy continue to take effect.

Understanding the risks and possible complications of Surgery

Fortunately, complications from facelift surgery are infrequent. Every year many thousands of operations are performed with no major problems and good results. However, everyone considering surgery should be aware of both the benefits and risks. The subject of risks and potential complications of surgery is best discussed on a personal level between you and your plastic surgeon.

- Bleeding may occur after facelift. It is most likely to occur immediately following surgery or that evening. It is possible that return to the operating room will be required in order to correct the problem. Taking Aspirin within two weeks leading up to your surgery significantly increases the risk of bleeding. Do not take any aspirin or medications containing aspirin within two weeks of surgery.
- Infection following facelift is uncommon due to the superior healing qualities of the facial tissues. In addition, all patients are given a dose of antibiotics with surgery. An infection may require treatment with further antibiotics or additional surgery.
- Surgical scars can be expected to be minimal and unnoticeable. However, while great care will be taken to give the neatest closure possible, individual wound healing can be unpredictable and it is possible that scars may take longer than usual to mature and you may be unhappy with some aspect of your incision line.

- It is possible for scarring around the earlobe to result in tightness and tethering. Scarring behind the ear can become lumpy and uncomfortable. Scarring in front of the ear may cause tightness and winging of the tragus (cartilage in front of the ear opening).
- The tension on the face and neck is taken in the hairline. The scars in these regions respond by widening and a hairdresser will always be able to detect them on close inspection. The scar behind the ear may be the most noticeable and it is helpful to have a hairstyle that conveniently covers this area. Keloid scars are due to a peculiarity of some patients' healing process, but are rare. Although unusual, scars in the hairline can create areas where hair growth does not occur.
- Skin loss. It is possible to lose small areas of skin, particularly in front of the ear. It is very important not to smoke during the early post operative period. If you are a heavy smoker, facelift may be ill advised and this should be carefully discussed with your surgeon before proceeding.
- Hair loss around the scalp incisions is an occasional complication of facelift surgery, occurring in less than 1% of operations.
- Bruising and swelling is usual and varies with each patient from being virtually invisible to extensive. Most of the severe cases have settled by about the third week, although some take longer. Swelling of the face can affect contour for some months and during this period of settling, improvement in facial contour can be expected. It is likely that close scrutiny of your face following the procedure may reveal some small irregularity in contour or symmetry. Having expectations of improvement rather than perfection is most likely to result in post operative satisfaction.
- As the final swelling settles, it may appear that the face is beginning to "fall". This is an inevitable minor consequence of the fact that the skin is stretched by post operative swelling and is usually complete within about three months
- Nerve injury. Facelift involves facial dissection very close to the course of the facial nerve. This major nerve of the face is responsible for movement of the face, particularly around the mouth, nose and eyes. It is possible that some temporary or rarely permanent weakness of a part of the face may result following facelift. It is usual to have some temporary numbness of the cheeks and sometimes of the ears. You can help to minimize certain risks by following the advice and instructions of Dr. Peterson both before and after your surgery.

Maintaining a relationship with your Plastic Surgeon

Should there be any questions regarding facelift surgery be sure to voice your concerns to Dr. Peterson. Before proceeding with the operation, consider your options and feel comfortable with your decision.

After surgery, you will return to The Athena Clinic for follow-up care at prescribed intervals, at which time your progress can be evaluated. Once the immediate postoperative follow-up is complete, we encourage our patients to come back for periodic check-ups to observe and discuss the long-term results of surgery.

Please remember that the relationship with your plastic surgeon does not end when you leave the operating room. Post-operative and follow up visits are very important. If you have questions or concerns during your recovery, or any time, please contact us.