

Essential Facts on Facelifts

By Kouros Azar, M.D.



It seems we have all experienced the rush of performing well at something even if it's the smallest of things. We learn with time that when we feel and look our best, we tend to perform our best. Many factors can lead to this but one is the positive feedback we receive when looking at ourselves or when others respond to how we look. Over time, some of this feedback can diminish from the aging process and many people seek to restore its power with the help of modern medicine. Among the most popular and talked about procedures is facelift surgery. There are a myriad of confusing myths and misunderstandings surrounding this procedure. Amongst experts in the field, facelift surgery is still considered the gold standard for rejuvenating the face and restoring a youthful and natural appearance. There were over 126,000 facelifts performed in the U.S. last year and the number is growing - not shrinking. Adding to the confusion is the tsunami of internet marketing information competing for our attention - daily. Let's explore some of the most common misconceptions and myths surrounding facelift surgery:

MYTH #1 NON-SURGICAL FACELIFTS ARE JUST AS GOOD AS A FACELIFT

There is a recent trend towards filler injections as an alternative to facelift surgery. While these treatments can mimic the after-effects of a facelift, the two just aren't the same. Injectables can reduce the appearance of fine lines, shadows and even add volume to certain areas of the face such as the cheeks and lips. These results are temporary and for many patients don't provide enough correction for the jaw line, jowls and

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loose neck skin. They do have value in buying time before a patient is mentally ready for surgery - so don't discount them completely. A facelift is best performed at an age that the skin is still at its best in terms of elasticity.

MYTH #2 EVERYONE WILL KNOW I HAD A FACELIFT AND I DON'T WANT TO LOOK DIFFERENT

It is a big concern to anyone considering plastic surgery that you might walk around forever broadcasting the fact that you once had work done. A trained, skilled and experienced plastic surgeon, however, aims to make every result as natural looking as possible. In fact, most surgeons who specialize in facelift surgery strive to avoid any signs of surgery by minimizing the visibility of any scars, avoiding any distortions of the earlobe and hairline. You are meant to enjoy the results, not carry them around like a badge for the rest of your life. There is also an inherent bias in noticing when somebody has had a facelift result you don't like. You most likely walk past dozens of people at an event or shopping mall every day that have had a facelift without you realizing it. They look great to you but most of the time you don't know that it was due to a facelift. The overwhelming majority of people have this sort of natural and seamless result.

MYTH #3: FACELIFTS MARKETING AS IN-OFFICE PROCEDURES — USUALLY TAKE ABOUT AN HOUR WITH LOCAL ANESTHESIA AND MINIMAL RECOVERY TIME — AND ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

Many patients have been disfigured or even experienced complications from procedures like these. At best - a poor value. If you want long lasting, natural changes that you're going to be happy with, it's better to seek a real facelift from a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon.

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The only Board recognized is the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Any other words or confusing names like cosmetic surgery, board certified without telling which board - should alert your investigative skills.

MYTH #4: A FACELIFT REQUIRES WEEKS OF PAINFUL RECOVERY

The truth is that most people feel great after a facelift. The improvement in self esteem usually overtakes most of the discomfort rather quickly. There are a few days of swelling and mild discomfort and bruising resolves in 2 weeks. New lasers take away redness of the scars right away instead of waiting months. The scars are fine lines hidden behind the natural curves of the ear. It is important to rest for the first week and follow the doctor's instructions for activity and diet for optimal healing.

MYTH #5: I'M TOO OLD OR TOO YOUNG FOR A FACELIFT

The age that someone is ready for a facelift can vary widely. Decades ago, it was unusual for someone younger than 60 to have a facelift. Now,

the modern thinking is that if someone feels mentally that they would benefit from looking and feeling younger, the ideal age to start thinking about it is between 47 and 57. This age provides optimal results because the skin elasticity is still relatively good. There is really no age limit as long as the person is physically and emotionally well enough to undergo the procedure. Facelifts can set the clock back typically as much as ten years or more. Having a facelift at a younger age provides you with an opportunity to enjoy the 10+ years ahead feeling your best rather than waiting. If you decide to have another one years later, the change is more subtle and you end up feeling great the entire age span instead of spending years waiting to feel your best. This has been a very successful modern view of facelifts for us.

These are just a few of the most common misconceptions about facelift surgery. As an expert in this area, I can verify that most people will experience a huge boost in self esteem and quality of life from these procedures, provided they have chosen a properly trained and experienced Board Certified Plastic Surgeon. It is important when you go in for a consultation to ask questions about how the procedure is done and really understand what is happening to feel empowered and safe. This takes the scare out of it. Focusing on the great results at the end of the process will help make it easier. The patient must feel totally comfortable with the surgeon and be able to ask questions easily. For those who feel they would benefit, the modern way of doing



facelift surgery is really quite a miraculous way to bring back people's sense of youthfulness and wellbeing.

Kouros Azar, M.D. Board Certified Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon (American Society of Plastic Surgeons) Member of American Society of Plastic Surgeons