

face refresher

Sydney plastic surgeon **Dr Jake Lim** spoke with Christine Doggett about improving the visible signs of facial ageing with a facelift.



As people age, the effects of gravity, along with the stresses of daily life and exposure to the sun, can be seen in their faces. Folds and fat deposits appear around the neck, the jaw line becomes slack, and deep creases form between the nose and mouth. A facelift can't stop the ageing process, but it can 'turn back the clock' by removing excess fat, tightening underlying muscles and redraping the skin of the face and neck.

'The aim of facelift surgery is to reduce the signs of ageing by improving the contours of the face and neck,' says Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Jake Lim. 'By removing the excess sagging skin and taking out or repositioning the excess fat, the facial skin appears younger and smoother. Usually the facial muscles are tightened too.'

The majority of Dr Lim's patients are aged between 40 and 65 years. 'By the time men and women are in their late 40s the facial skin has lost much of its tone and elasticity,' Dr Lim explains.

'With age, the neck and jaw line lose definition and the tissues begin to sag, and wrinkles occur on top of this looseness,' he continues. '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.'

Facelifts are very individualised procedures, and the outcome depends on the age of the patient and the degree of ageing. At the initial consultation Dr Lim evaluates the patient's face, including the skin and the underlying bone,

and discusses the aims of the surgery. Generally, patients sleep through the procedure under general anaesthetic.

Small incisions are made in or behind the hairline in the temple areas; then in front of and behind the ear and into the hairline. According to Dr Lim, the incisions are virtually invisible after healing as they are made in the hair or within and around the ear.

The surgeon then separates the skin from the fat and muscle below. Submental fat under the chin may be trimmed or liposuctioned to improve the contour of the jaw line.

In a facelift procedure the underlying SMAS muscle and the platysma enveloping 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.

'Generally, the surgery takes two to three hours to complete,' Dr Lim explains. 'The patient stays overnight and normally requires two to three weeks off work. In most cases, swelling and bruising gradually recede by four to six weeks after surgery.'

A 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.

'A facelift will usually last five to ten years, depending upon the lifestyle of the patient,' Dr Lim says. 'The patient can expect to look fresher and more youthful, and in many cases self-confidence is enhanced too.' **acsm**



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Lim



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Lim



BEFORE



AFTER facelift by Dr Lim