

FACE LIFT

The facelift is basically a misnomer in many ways, because we are not really lifting as much as we are restructuring the face. When we think about aging of the face, there are different components to the aged face.

One is the skin of course, and you have wrinkles and maybe pigment changes, increase in pore size; there is laxity of the skin, there is volume loss and those sorts of things, and the facelift really addresses the skin component and some of the volume component, and the idea is to gently re-drape, not necessarily lift, but re-drape a slightly tighter skin over a remodeled undersurface of the face. We do not simply lift the face.

I think many years ago, facelifts got a bad reputation because a lot of the patients looked pulled. Nowadays, that is generally not done, thankfully, and what we do is restructure the underlying tissues. One of the layers is called a SMAS and that is basically the fatty layer beneath the skin (attached to the muscles). So we will elevate the skin up and then find that fatty layer (SMAS) that is descending that creates the jowls, or the droopy cheeks, and internally suspend these areas.

In addition, I like to add fat as well to smooth out transition zones, between like the lid and the cheek and sometimes in front of the ear, and then we re-drape the skin over the restructured face. The incisions for a facelift generally include one that starts at the ear, sometimes higher depending on how much pulling we need, or redraping, and then come around behind the ear and into the hairline (to keep the scars well hidden).

Fortunately, the incisions are generally well hidden in a facelift, and for the most part, people will never know you had it based on the way we can camouflage or hide these incisions. And when it is done properly with volume enhancement and restructuring, it looks very, very natural.

TAKE HOME POINT: Face lift surgery is really a reshaping procedure that addresses skin and underlying tissues to remodel the face to a younger appearance.