

Ageing skin, Antiageing treatments, and facelift-FAQs

As people age, the effects of gravity, exposure to the sun, the various stresses of daily life and the inevitable process of ageing leave their marks on face. Wrinkles form around eyes, on fore head, deep creases form between the nose and mouth (nasolabial fold). The jaw line grows slack and skin droops at the jaw line (jowls). Folds and fat deposits appear around the neck.

Since time immemorial, man has always tried to reverse the process of aging. Of late, there has been an upsurge in the number of treatment modalities available for treating aging changes because of several reasons. Changing social attitudes, improved access to information and hence better awareness, increasing disposable income have all lead to an upsurge in demand for antiaging treatments. The urge to look good has increased, not only in the affluent, but also in the middle income population. The exposure in media, and internet, and globalization has also contributed to these changes. These FAQs explain the ageing changes and their treatments, with particular reference to facelift procedure.

What are the different ageing changes?

Ageing changes may be seen in different ways;

a) The aging brow changes include lowering of the eyebrows, horizontal furrows and folds, vertical lines between the eyebrows, elevated hairline due to loss of hair.

b) The aging eyelid changes include folding of the upper eyelid that can make it difficult to keep the eyelid open, weakening of support for the lower eyelid that can let the lid sag away -baggy eyes, darkening of skin around eyes, wrinkling of skin at the outer corners of the eyes - "crow's feet"

c)The aging face changes include pigmentation of skin over cheeks, descent of tissue from the cheekbones towards the cheeks resulting in less prominent cheeks ,deepening of the nasolabial folds (the lines between the nose and the corners of the mouth) ,extra tissue below the jaw line creating bulges called jowls ,sagging neck muscles that can tighten into bands with expression ,wrinkles at the angle of the mouth and folds at the angle of the mouth(called marionette lines)

While modern medicine cannot stop the aging process, it can certainly help to “set back the clock ‘ partially. Dermatologists can now improve the visible signs of aging by removing wrinkles, excess fat, tightening underlying muscles, and rejuvenate the skin of the face and neck.

Why does skin age and sag?

Skin sags due to several reasons which may intrinsic or extrinsic.

Intrinsic factors include:

1. Ageing skin loses collagen fibres. These fibres are present in skin to give firmness and tensile strength.
2. With ageing, skin becomes thin
3. With ageing, muscles lose tone
4. With ageing , there is loss of fat in the skin

Extrinsic factors for sagging include gravity, stress, sunlight .

All these factors together cause wrinkles, sagging, depressions etc.

Each of these factors need to be corrected while treating ageing skin

Can these be prevented?

There are no fool proof remedies to prevent these changes.

Avoidance of sub exposure, use of sun screens and moisturizers,,

proper diet, avoidance of stress can help in delaying these changes

Some drugs such as vitamin C, Vitamin E, retinol, antioxidants may be of benefit, but the effect of these drugs is difficult to quantify

What is face lift surgery?

A facelift (medically **called rhytidectomy**) is the name for such procedures that address these problems. Literally facelift means lifting the sagging or drooping skin. A facelift can be done alone, or in combination with other procedures such as a forehead lift (**brow lift**), eyelid surgery (**blepharoplasty**), or nose reshaping (**rhinoplasty**).

Face-lifting has been performed since early 1900's. However, traditionally face lifting has been a major surgical procedure needing anesthesia, hospital admission, recovery time of several weeks, and considerable expenditure. Complications that can occur in a surgical face lift include haematoma (a collection of blood under the skin that must be removed by the surgeon), injury to the nerves that control facial muscles (usually temporary), infection, delayed healing and reactions to the anesthesia. For these reasons, it has been

infrequently performed and has always been the preserve of the rich and famous.

What is new in face lift?

Since early 1990 a number of developments have helped to render this previously difficult procedure into an easy procedure and accessible to all. *Since ageing of skin is due to several different components, one treatment will not be suitable for all changes. A cocktail of treatments to be tailored for each patient.*

What are the new options in Ageing skin treatment?

The first major development was chemical peels. Lasers were introduced in early 90s. Microdermabrasion was also introduced in early 90s. Then came Botox and injections called fillers. In 1998, came aptos thread to revolutionize the face lift procedure. The latest is thermal lift.

What is botox?

Botox is a chemical substance obtained from the bacteria Botulinum. At high doses it is toxic to muscles and leads to paralysis and hence the name Botox. This property is used to weaken muscles for beneficial purposes.

What can Botox do?

Wrinkles on the forehead, angle of eyes, mouth neck are due to persistent contraction of muscles of expression (anger, sadness, happiness etc). In early ageing, these lines become prominent during their action (expressions) and are called dynamic wrinkles.

Later they become fixed even at rest and become permanent and are called fixed wrinkles. Botox is useful for wrinkles caused by contraction of muscles of expression

How is Botox administered?

It is injected into these muscles in small doses to cause their weakening. This leads to avoidance of wrinkles.

How is the benefit seen?

Benefit is seen in 1 week. The effect lasts between 4 months to 8 months. Hence repeat injections are needed. With repeat injections, duration of effect lasts longer and longer

For whom is Botox useful?

It is more useful for early dynamic wrinkles than fixed wrinkles. So men and women in their 30s and 40s are good candidates.

Does Botox have Side effects?

Botox has been given for millions of patients. It has been found to be free from side effects if given by a trained person and properly. Mild redness and swelling may occur for a day

What is chemical peel?

Chemical peel is a procedure to rejuvenate skin by using acids. These acids are organic acids such as alpha hydroxy acids derived from plants, salicylic acid and trichloroacetic acid. These cause superficial peels and are safe in Indian skin. Rarely phenol is used, but not on Indian skin. Alpha hydroxy acid peels (Glycolic acid peels) are the commonest acid used. Salicylic acid peel is also useful in Indian skin

What are the after effects of chemical peels?

All peels cause mild redness of skin lasting for 1-2 days

Results are seen after 3-4 weeks and may need to be repeated 3-4 times once in 3-4 weeks.

What are the Chemical peels useful for?

These are useful for fine wrinkles on face, pigmentation changes

What is Microdermabrasion?

Microdermabrasion is a simple device which rubs the skin with aluminum oxide crystals under suction. It resurfaces the skin in a phased manner serially, layer by layer. It is a mild and very safe method of treatment with no side effects. It is performed 6-8 times once a week. It is useful for superficial blemishes, wrinkles

What is filler injection?

Fillers are artificial substance which when deposited in skin occupy space and lift skin. They are derived from either collagen, hyaluronic acid or synthetic substances. They are useful for nasolabial furrow, lip lines and all fixed wrinkles on face, cheeks, acne scars etc

How do the fillers work?

The effect is immediate and may last from 6 months to 5 years depending on the filler used. They are safe and do not cause serious adverse reactions. However the claims about permanent results needs to be proven.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of Fillers?

Their advantages include instantaneous effects and easy procedure. They can also be used to reshape nose, chin, cheeks, lips, breasts. Hence they are enabling us to do in a simple way many procedures

which needed previously, complicated surgeries. However, they are expensive: from 15000-25000 Rs.

What is laser rejuvenation?

Initially, ablative lasers(CO2 laser, Erbiyum Yag laser) were introduced to resurface skin and rejuvenate skin. However, these used to burn or destroy the outer layer of skin and hence had a prolonged healing time . Now new Nonablative lasers are available for such rejuvenation(erbiyum glass laser, Long pulse Nd Yag laser). Another technology called Intense pulse light is also used for nonablative or dermal rejuvenation. These machines are useful for fine wrinkles and pigmentation changes.

What is aptos? (Also called Thread lift , contour lift, feather lift):

Dr Marlen Sulmanidze first described this procedure called aptos(ptosis means sagging- anti ptosis means antisagging). The concept behind thread lifts is that polypropylene sutures, hitherto used to suture skin and internal organs in various operations are introduced into deeper layer of skin, through small holes . These threads have barbs or cogs or serrations on the surface and hence stay in the same place. After introduced, they are pulled and anchored so that skin gets lifted, to give the desired appearance.



Figure showing cogs or serrations on the thread which hold the thread in place when placed in skin

After introduced, they are pulled and anchored so that skin gets lifted, to give the desired appearance.

What are the Advantages of aptos thread lift?

it is done under local anesthesia, patient is fully aware and conscious, Patient and goes home soon after surgery with out any hospital admission

hence is much cheaper than conventional surgical face lift.

The procedure lasts for only 15-20 minutes.

What can the aptos threads do?

The threads can:

Lift sagging eyebrows

Adjust asymmetric eyebrows

Reposition sagging cheeks

Lift drooping soft tissue of the mid and lower face and neck

Smooth out premature skin aging



Fig showing placement of threads

to lift sagging skin

Are there any side effects?

Patient may have mild swelling after the procedure, but this subsides in two days. Pain is minimal .Ice compresses are applied for the swelling

When are the results seen?

Results are seen with in 2-3 days.

How long do the results last?

Threads do not get dissolved and hence the results last for many years.

When can patient go to work?

Patient will be able to return to work in 2-4 days.

Can it be combined with other treatments?

The treatment can also be combined with other procedures such as Botox, laser, fillers , peels and thermal lift for other wrinkles and folds.

What is Thermal lift?(Also called Radiolift or skin tightening)

Originally developed by the company Thermage in USA, this procedure is a thermal procedure that uses radio frequency waves to reconstruct the deep tissue layers beneath the skin. Several Indian companies have also introduced similar Non ablative radiofrequency machine.

This procedure is a thermal procedure that uses radio frequency waves to reconstruct the deep tissue layers beneath the skin.In this technique, radio frequency waves are delivered using a probe, which is pressed against the skin. These radio waves get past the outer skin layers and selectively deliver heat energy to the deeper layer of skin, fat and muscles, with out burning of outer layer. The heat helps to contract these layers and build up collagen fibres. At the same time a

cooling device is used to cool the outer layer, preventing any discomfort due to the heat. The overall result is a tightening of skin and reduces wrinkling effects. Most patients experience only minor discomfort and since there is no damage to the outer layer of skin called epidermis, it is referred to as Nonablative rejuvenation (In contrast to the ablative rejuvenation by laser).

What are the advantages of Thermal lift?

This treatment has major advantages for the Indian skin because the Indian skin has a great tendency for pigmentation and even minor skin damage can lead to post procedure pigmentation-a common side effect of the laser ablative rejuvenation.

How long does the Thermal lift procedure last ?

The procedure takes between 10 minutes to an hour. The face may look pink after surgery which subsides in 1-2 days. .Patient may return to work the next day.

When are results seen?

Some tightening of skin is felt immediately and further improvement is seen in the subsequent weeks. This is a result more felt than seen.

Are repeat treatments needed?

2-4 treatments may be needed

Summary: Facelift made simple

Thus facelift has now joined the growing list of lunch time or weekend cosmetic procedures and has become accessible to greater number of patients. The demand for cosmetic surgery and cosmetic procedure is greater than ever, and patients now have more options offering less invasive procedures that boast faster recovery times,

less scarring, and more natural results, often at cheaper prices. Globalization and exposure in media have fed the imagination of the public. However, one should understand that any procedure will not give someone beautiful skin unless they have some beauty to begin with. Also, aging process is continuous and relentless, and till now no elixir or panacea has been found to completely reverse the process. Often cosmetic procedures are advertised with hype and exaggeration. Hence patients should have realistic expectations and seek full information while making the decision. Ideal candidates for thread lifts include people who have early and minimal signs of aging and need just a little lift. If major and advanced signs of aging are already apparent, more traditional, extensive surgical options may be needed.

In all these treatments, proper knowledge of the procedure, skill and training of the surgeon is very important. DR Venkataram has undergone training under DR Martin Sulmanidze, from Russia, the father of threadlift, for aptos threads. He has undergone training in Muscat ,Munich, Cairo for chemical peeling , Botox and fillers. For details contact 91-80-23392788;mysorevenkat@hotmail.com

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