DAVID M. WHITEMAN, M.D., F.R.C.S.,
OF SOUTHERN PLASTIC SURGERY ON

FACELIFTS

The before and after of a mini-facelift performed by Dr. Whiteman

Description of the procedure: A facelift (rhytidectomy) reduces the signs of aging by tightening the facial muscles, removing unwanted fat and then tapering the skin around the face and neck.

Average cost: Since a facelift can encompass various procedures and additional fees such as anesthesia, $6,000-$8,500 is the average price range.

Time involved with the preoperative process, the surgery itself and recovery: First there is a consultation and evaluation of the patient. After examining the position of their hairline and eyebrows and the effect of aging on their upper and lower eyelids, midface and neck, an appropriate recommendation for correction is made. Three to four hours is typically allotted for a true facelift surgery, and most patients are able to return to work in about a week.

Duration of results: Although the duration depends upon the individual, results typically last five to 10 years.

Technique(s) recommended: There has been an evolution in facelift procedures toward minimally scarring techniques and procedures in order to enhance patient recovery and promote a more rapid return to the patient's lifestyle. In my 14 years of experience, I have come to believe techniques that focus primarily on skin, such as the newer thread-type procedures, fail to correct the true underlying abnormalities.

Duration of discomfort: Most patients do not find the procedure particularly uncomfortable and few require significant pain medication after surgery.

Frequency and upkeep of treatment: After five to 10 years, another procedure could be considered.

Inpatient/outpatient procedure: The majority of facelifts are done in an outpatient setting, but patients can stay overnight if needed.

General/local anesthesia: The type of anesthetic varies with the extent of the procedure, but the majority of patients do better with some form of anesthetic beyond purely local.

Risks and side effects: Fortunately, the procedure has a relatively low incidence of complications. The issue of significant bruising and swelling has been reduced through homeopathic medications and less invasive approaches.

Best complementary procedures to have simultaneously: Complementary surgical procedures such as brow-lifting and eyelid surgery, as well as non-surgical procedures such as Restylane and Botox injections may enhance the overall results and can easily be addressed at the time of consultation.

The popularity of plastic surgery continues to rise. Check out these 2005 stats from the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.*

In a survey done by the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, **55 PERCENT OF WOMEN AND 52 PERCENT OF MEN** say they approve of cosmetic surgery.

Americans spent approximately **$12.4 BILLION** on cosmetic procedures.

More than **300,000** Americans had breast augmentations.

11.5 MILLION surgical and non-surgical cosmetic procedures were done.

* Statistics for 2006 are not yet available.