



## Lip Lift

Lip lift surgery is surgery to lift the upper lip to a more pleasing or youthful position. As we age, the pink part of our lip thins and the length of our upper lip increases. A lip lift counteracts the effect of gravity on the ageing lip position and shortens a long upper lip. Lip lifts also give the impression of a fuller upper lip (pink part) due to the way in which the upper lip is repositioned during the lift surgery. Repositioning the lip has an anti-ageing effect on the mouth area giving a fresher, more rejuvenated appearance to the face. The scar is very discrete due to its careful positioning and heals well.

### Indications for lip lift surgery

- Long upper lip
- Thin upper lip
- Lengthening of the upper lip with ageing

### Limitations of lip lift surgery

- Enough upper lip length needs to be left behind to maintain a natural appearance and to hold a natural position relative to your teeth when the mouth is relaxed
- If a very full appearance to the upper lip is desired, lip fillers or lip augmentation may be needed in addition to a lip lift
- Fine lines and wrinkles may require some additional treatments such as dermal fillers
- Lip lift surgery should not be performed if you have an active cold sore. If you have had cold sores, it is important to inform Ms Nugent as you may need a course of anti-viral medication to prevent a cold sore during the recovery period.

### Procedure details

Pre and post surgery clinical photographs of your lip will be taken. A lip lift is usually performed under local anaesthesia (while you are awake). Careful measurements and markings will be made on your upper lip and then the local anaesthetic will be injected to numb the area. A carefully placed incision around the base of your nostrils will be made and the excess upper lip skin removed in a pattern designed to give a very natural effect. The skin will then be meticulously sutured and tapes placed on the incision. The procedure takes between 45 and 60 minutes.

### Post-operative course

It is usual to have some swelling, bruising and discomfort of your upper lip particularly in the first few days following surgery. This will settle over the 1 to 2 weeks following surgery.

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Sometimes you will have numbness in the upper lip temporarily. Sutures will be removed at 1 week following surgery and the tapes will be removed then too.

## Recovery

Cool compresses can be placed over the area for comfort and to help reduce swelling and bruising. It is best to avoid bending, stooping and any heavy or strenuous activity during the healing process. Sleep on 2 to 3 pillows at night to help reduce swelling. Painkillers such as paracetamol can be taken as needed. Most people can return to work and social engagements after 1 to 2 weeks and get back to normal activities after 3 to 4 weeks. The scars usually heal very quickly and gradually fade to very well hidden fine lines.

## Complications

While most lip lifts go very smoothly and patients are delighted with the results, as with any procedure there are some risks associated with lip lift surgery.

- Swelling and bruising. This will peak around day 2 to 3 post surgery and will gradually reduce after that. Most of the swelling is usually gone by 2 weeks but occasionally lasts longer than expected.
- Bleeding. Occasionally there is more bleeding than expected from the incisions or bleeding under the skin forming a haematoma. Rarely a return to theatre or the procedure room is needed to deal with this. Please inform Ms Nugent if you take blood-thinning medications that may increase your risk.
- Infection. Infection rates are low in lip lift surgery. If an infection occurs, you will be treated with antibiotics and rarely a return to theatre or the procedure room is needed to washout or further treat the wound.
- Numbness. Occasionally numbness in the upper lip persists for longer than expected.
- Slow healing/poor scars. Lip lift incisions usually heal very quickly and well but occasionally take longer than expected particularly if infection or bleeding has occurred. Occasionally the scars heal in a poorer condition than expected.
- Asymmetry. No-one is perfectly symmetrical and these differences may persist after surgery but are usually small enough that they are not overly visible and do not require any treatment. Occasionally further treatment is required to address a significant asymmetry following lip lift surgery.
- Weakness of lip movement. Rarely there is weakness of movement of the lip. This is usually temporary and resolves over time but occasionally persists longer than expected.

## Longevity of procedure

Lip lift surgery has a high success rate and is considered an excellent procedure for rejuvenating the mouth area. You will continue to age at the same rate and in the same way that you always would have. However after lip lift surgery, the earlier effects of ageing are removed and your start point for future ageing is from a more youthful position. As the years go by, you may gradually develop further lengthening but this will be to a lesser extent than if you did not undergo lip lift surgery.

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