

FACELIFT

Background

A facelift is intended to rejuvenate the face, particularly the cheeks, jowls and neck. This procedure can be undertaken in conjunction with eyelid surgery and brow lifts as part of an overall strategy to rejuvenate the face and improve facial harmony.

The treatment

A full facelift operation involves an incision in front of the ear, back up behind the ear and transversely across the hairline. Redundant underlying connective tissue (the 'SMAS' layer) is tightened and redundant skin is excised. This is usually performed with a 2-3 night stay. Mr Banwell also performs the MACS lift (minimal access cranial suspension) which utilises a shorter scar which is often useful for the younger patient.

The benefits

A facelift helps re-define the jawline and neck and tightens up the skin and underlying tissues. This can create a significantly more youthful look. However, please remember it is also very important to pay attention to your skin. If poor quality, dull skin is facelifted, it will still not create a good result!

Duration of Surgery

The surgery can take anything up to 4 hours depending on the complexity and severity of the problem. Drains are usually inserted on each side, and these will normally stay in for 1-2 days.

Complications of Surgery

Unfortunately complications can occur following any surgery and patients need to be fully aware of this. Mr Banwell does his utmost to minimise the complication rate and likes to practise in a safe manner. The commonest complications are scarring, widened scars, hypertrophic scars, bleeding, haematoma formation and the need to return to theatre, infection, skin necrosis, skin numbness, earlobe numbness and altered positioning, asymmetry in the healing and the final result, alopecia, wound healing delay and damage to the facial nerve. Clots in the legs and lungs can also occur. Please note that complications are dramatically increased if you are smoking and Mr Banwell will not operate on you unless you have stopped smoking 6 weeks before the operation.

After Surgery

You will usually be in hospital for two to three nights. The wounds will be sutured and any sutures in front of the ear removed at one week. Any further sutures (in the hairline) will be removed at 10 days post-operatively. You will be able to shower the day after you leave hospital and then use a hairdryer on a warm setting to dry the tape off. You will usually need to take 3 weeks off work and will return to normal within 6-8 weeks

Recovery

It is important to minimize your activities in the first few weeks. Bending or lifting should be avoided as well as strenuous exercise for 6 weeks. Many patients find gentle cardiovascular exercises are fine after a few weeks. You should refrain from sexual intercourse for 6 weeks and should not drive until it is safe to perform an emergency stop. Swimming is permitted once your wounds are healed.

Success and satisfaction.

Patients repeatedly report how happy they are with the results of this type of surgery and they accept the scarring involved as well as the recovery period.

Important Notice

Mr Banwell strongly advises you stop smoking prior to surgery as this can affect the outcome of surgery and increase complication rates. Nutritional supplements, anticoagulant medication and blood thinners (eg. aspirin and brufen) all increase the risk of bleeding and should be stopped prior to surgery unless otherwise instructed.

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NOTES & QUESTIONS

AT A GLANCE

SURGERY TIME

3 - 4 Hours

HOSPITAL STAY

3 nights

ANAESTHETIC ASSESSMENT

Yes

PRE ADMISSION TESTS

Yes

SLEEPING POSITION

Sleeping on back recommended for 4 weeks

REASONABLY MOBILE

48 hours rest

WASHING

Shower after 2 days.

DRIVING

2 week

EXERCISE INCLUDING GYM

8 weeks

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Restricted activity after 8 weeks

FULL RECOVERY

6 - 8 weeks

TIME OFF WORK

3 weeks