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## Neck Lift

### Patient Information Handout

#### Neck Lift

With age we see sagging of the skin of the neck, loosening and displacement of superficial neck muscles ('banding'), loss of the sharp angle between neck and chin and the accumulation of fat under the chin. We are still learning more about our perceptions of aging and the vital role that the neck and perifacial area plays in contributing to an aged appearance. In fact, a study in which patients were prematurely aged in either the face or neck using computer software showed that patients with 'aged' necks were usually selected as being older than those with youthful necks and aged faces. A neck lift is a surgical procedure which aims to provide a more youthful and smoother neck. It involves tightening loose skin as well as where applicable addressing 'bands' in the neck and fat under the chin. A neck lift can be done as a standalone procedure but is most commonly done in association with a facelift.



#### What Will it Do?

A neck lift involves addressing fat (by liposuction and/or excision), tightening laxity of superficial neck musculature and redraping the skin, thereby improving the contour of the neck.

#### Is it Right for Me?

At your initial consult, Mr. Bunker will discuss your motivations and concerns, clinically assess for stigmata of aging and generate a treatment plan. Any facial rejuvenation surgery is a highly individualised procedure and may not be suitable for everyone. Neck lift surgery may be a good option for you if:

- You have loose skin and excess fatty deposits under the chin and jaw, creating the appearance of a double chin
- You have 'banding' at the front of the neck
- You are physically healthy and do not have medical conditions that significantly increase the risks of surgery or anaesthesia
- You have realistic expectations of what face lift surgery can accomplish
- You are a non-smoker or have stopped smoking at least 3 months ago
- Important considerations are:
  - Sometimes fullness in the neck is due to deeper structures such as the parotid gland or descent of the submandibular glands, which may not be addressed with a neck lift.
  - The natural aging process continues after a neck lift.
  - Smokers and patients with high blood pressure are at increased risk of complications. You need to stop smoking and have your blood pressure under control to be considering for neck lift surgery.

### **Will I need Anaesthesia?**

Mr. Bunker performs neck lift under general anaesthetic to maximise patient comfort. Modern anaesthetics are safe and effective but carry some risks, which you will discuss with your anaesthetist.

### **Will I need to stay in Hospital?**

Usually one night in hospital is required after a neck lift. This allows your blood pressure to be monitored, ensure there are no early complications such as bleeding, and make sure your pain is well-controlled prior to discharge and also means drains inserted at surgery can be removed prior to going home and any necessary dressing changes performed.

### **What are the Risks and Complications?**

All surgery has risks. There are general risks which apply to all operations as well as specific risks for individual procedures. General risks and complications of surgery may include:

- Bleeding
- Infection that may require treatment with antibiotics or further surgery in some cases
- Allergic reaction (to sutures, dressings or antiseptic solutions)
- The formation of a large blood clot (haematoma) or fluid (seroma) beneath the skin that may require drainage
- Pain, bruising and swelling around the operated sites
- Keloids and hypertrophic scars that are raised, red and thickened scars over the healed incisions. These may be itchy, annoying and unsightly but are not a threat to health
- Poor or slow healing
- Wound breakdown
- Short-term nausea following general anaesthesia and other risks related to anaesthesia

Specific risks and complications associated with neck lift surgery include:

- Hair loss around the scars, this is usually temporary but sometimes may be permanent
- Loss of skin due to impaired blood supply. This may require a skin graft.
- Bruising and swelling
- Numbness around operated sites. In most cases this is temporary and will improve over many months
- Deformity of the earlobe
- Slight difference in appearance between the right and left sides of the neck
- Damage to the facial nerve, which occurs in about one in every one hundred patients. It can result in partial loss of movement and a "lopsided" appearance of the face. In rare cases, the damage may be permanent
- Revisional surgery may be necessary to correct complications

### **Where will the Surgery take place?**

Your surgery will take place in an accredited hospital facility.

### **What do I need to do Before Surgery?**

- Due to the recent cosmetic surgery reforms, all patients in Australia undergoing cosmetic surgery are required to undertake a Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire.
- Avoid any strenuous activity or exercise in the week before your surgery
- Ensure you have arranged appropriate help at home including someone to stay with you for the first 24 hours. Consider pillows, cool compresses and a telephone within reach. Make sure you arrange for a relative or friend to drive you to and from the hospital or clinic.

- Consider work arrangements. Most patients will remain off work for 4 – 6 weeks after surgery. A medical certificate can be supplied to your pre-operatively if required
- Take Vitamin C supplements 1gram a daily starting at least 2 weeks before your surgery, unless you are allergic or unable to tolerate
- Wash your hair the night before your surgery
- Do not wear **any** make-up on the day of surgery
- Be as fit as possible to help the recovery process
- You will be asked to complete a full medical history. You must list all medications you take including dietary supplements such as fish oil which increase your risk of bleeding.
- Check with your surgeon about your medications as some may need to be stopped. Any additional tests required preoperatively will be arranged by Mr. Bunker or your anaesthetists.
- If you decide to have facelift surgery, your surgeon will ask you to sign a consent form. Make sure you read the consent form carefully before signing. If you have any questions, ask your surgeon.
- You will receive detailed preoperative and postoperative instructions. Follow them carefully.

### **What do I need to do After Surgery?**

- Arrange for a relative or friend to drive you home after the surgery. Someone should also stay with you for at least the first day after the operation and preferably for a few days.
- Follow your postoperative instructions including taking any prescribed medications.
- Some bruising and swelling is normal and may take up to a few weeks to disappear. Sleeping with your head elevated will help to reduce the swelling.
- Avoid heavy lifting, strenuous exercise, swimming and strenuous sports for 6 weeks after surgery.
- You will receive specific instructions on post-operative care. These instructions may include:
  - How to care for your surgical sites following surgery
  - Medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the risk of infection
  - Specific concerns to look for at the surgical sites or in your general health
  - Follow-up arrangements

If you experience any of the following symptoms, notify your surgeon immediately:

- Temperature higher than 38°C or chills
- Heavy bleeding from the incisions
- Worsening redness around the incision sites
- Increasing pain or tenderness
- Any other concerns

### **Will I have Scarring?**

Scars are an inevitable part of any surgery and are created when any incision through the skin heals. Mr. Bunker will endeavour to minimise scarring and to keep your scars as inconspicuous as possible by locating the incisions in hidden sites where practicable. Scars usually fade with time and become barely noticeable. If you are prone to scarring, advise your surgeon.

### **Will I need Revisional Surgery?**

Revisional surgery may be necessary to correct irregularities or issues with wound healing.

## How much does a Neck Lift Cost?

Cost is always a consideration in elective surgery and may include:

- Surgical fee
- Hospital or surgical facility costs
- Anaesthesia fees
- Prescriptions for medication
- Medical tests

A quote for the surgical fee is provided to you prior to surgery. This also contains instructions on how to obtain quotes for associated fees as listed above. If you have further questions, please contact the Practice Manager.

## Terms You Should Know:

- **General anaesthesia:** Drugs and/or gases used during an operation to relieve pain and alter consciousness. When you are under general anaesthesia you are 'asleep'.
- **Intravenous sedation:** Sedatives administered by injection into a vein to achieve relaxation. Also referred to as 'twilight' anaesthesia.
- **Local anaesthesia:** A drug injected directly to the site of an incision during an operation to relieve pain. Also referred to as 'numbed with needles'.
- **Platysmal bands:** Folds of skin hanging down from under the skin to near the Adam's apple, due to separation and loosening of a superficial neck muscle called the platysma.
- **Cervicomental angle:** The angle formed between your neck and a line drawn under your chin (on a side view). With age, this angle becomes more obtuse and contributes to the appearance of aging.



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