

## **ADDENDUM TO INFORMATION SHEET REGARDING FACE LIFT**

### **SECOND TIME FACE LIFT**

A SECOND FACE LIFT CAN BE POTENTIALLY MORE DIFFICULT THAN A FIRST TIME FACE LIFT. THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS. THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT THE SKIN WILL HAVE AGED AND LOST MORE ELASTICITY THAN WAS PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST FACE LIFT. THIS MEANS THAT THE SKIN IS PROBABLY SLIGHTLY LESS STRETCHABLE THAN AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST FACE LIFT AND THERE IS A TENDENCY FOR THE SKIN TO RELAX AGAIN MORE QUICKLY THAN AFTER THE FIRST FACE LIFT.

ANOTHER REASON IS THAT IN THE TIME BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND FACE LIFT MORE WRINKLES HAVE APPEARED AND THOSE THAT WERE PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST FACE LIFT AND WHICH HAVE REOCCURRED WILL BE MORE DEEPLY ETCHED INTO THE SKIN THAN ON THE FIRST OCCASION.

PATIENTS OFTEN DON'T REALISE THAT A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE AS SUCCESSFUL APPARENTLY AS IN THE FIRST FACE LIFT BECAUSE OF THIS AGING PROCESS. THERE ARE OTHER POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN DOING A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT WHICH INCLUDES SOME OF THE FOLLOWING.

THE SKIN MAY WELL HAVE BECOME MORE FRAGILE DURING THE INTERVENING YEARS AND MAY WELL BRUISE MORE EASILY THAN ON THE FIRST OCCASION. THE QUALITY OF HEALING SHOULD NOT BE ANY DIFFERENT THAN ON THE FIRST OCCASION UNLESS THE PATIENT IS SUFFERING FROM VITAMIN DEFICIENCY. THE SKIN AND IMMEDIATE FATTY LAYER UNDER THE SKIN MAY BE SOMEWHAT THINNER AND LESS ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE TENSION THAT IS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM LIFT.

FORTUNATELY THE LATTER IS NOT DESPERATELY IMPORTANT BECAUSE MOST OF THE LIFT IS DEPENDANT UPON TIGHTENING UP THE LAYERS UNDERNEATH THE SKIN (THE SMAS OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE DEEP FASCIA).

ONE OF THE OTHER PROBLEMS THAT A SURGEON MAY FACE IN DOING A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT IS MAKING THE DISSECTION THROUGH THE SCAR TISSUE LEFT FROM THE FIRST OPERATION. IN MOST PATIENTS THIS DOESN'T MATTER VERY MUCH BECAUSE THIS SCAR LAYER HAS THINNED OUT, SOFTENED AND BECOME FLEXIBLE BUT OCCASIONALLY IT CAN BE A PROBLEM WHICH ADDS TO THE DEGREE OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT HOW THE OPERATION IS GOING TO PROCEED.

THE STYLE OF FACE LIFTS AND THE INCISION LINES MADE FOR THEM HAVE CHANGED IN A SUBTLE WAY OVER THE YEARS BUT ONCE A FACE LIFT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT IT LIMITS THE CHOICE OF INCISION THAT CAN BE USED BY A SURGEON IN THE SECOND FACE LIFT. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE INCISION HAS BEEN MADE ALONG THE HAIRLINE BEHIND THE EAR THEN THE SAME INCISION HAS TO BE USED AGAIN A SECOND TIME RATHER THAN THE MORE FAVOURABLY POSITIONED AND COSMETIC POSITIONING INSIDE THE HAIR LINE WHERE IT DOESN'T SHOW.

ANOTHER AREA OF DIFFICULTY MAY BE IN THE SIDEBURN AREA. THE COMMON TECHNIQUES OF FIRST TIME FACE LIFTING LEAD TO REPOSITIONING OF THE SIDEBURNS SLIGHTLY HIGHER AND ONE CAN GET AWAY WITH THIS VERY SATISFACTORILY IN THE FIRST FACE LIFT BUT ONE CAN'T USE THE SAME TECHNIQUE IN THE SECOND FACE LIFT WITHOUT RAISING THE SIDEBURN TO A LEVEL HIGHER THAN IS USUALLY CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE.

ANOTHER PROBLEM CAN BE THAT IN THE INTERVENING YEARS THE PERSON'S HAIR HAS THINNED OUT A LOT AND THUS ANY SCAR WILL TEND TO SHOW THROUGH UNLESS IT IS CLEVERLY DISGUISED EITHER BY ZIGZAGGING IT OR SOME OTHER METHOD.

IF THE FIRST SURGEON HAS RAISED THE LEVEL OF THE SIDEBURN TO ABOVE THE EAR, IT IS USUALLY SENSIBLE TO MAKE THE SECOND FACE LIFT THROUGH AN INCISION WHICH RUNS AROUND THE FRONT EDGE OF THE SIDEBURN UP PAST THE TEMPLE BECAUSE THIS DOES NOT RAISE THE LEVEL OF THE SIDEBURN AND IN FACT OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIFT THE SKIN AND DEEP TISSUES THROUGH LESS UNDERMINING OFTEN WITH A MARKED IMPROVEMENT TO THE CROW'S FEET AREA AND A GENTLE LIFT TO THE OUTER END OF THE EYEBROW. SOME PEOPLE REGARD THIS AS A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE IN THE SECOND TIME FACE LIFT BECAUSE ONE IS FORCED TO USE THIS APPROACH AND THE ONLY PROBLEM ABOUT IT IS THAT IN SOME PEOPLE THE SCAR STRETCHES A BIT AND BECOMES SLIGHTLY MORE NOTICEABLE THAN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF THE ROUTINE APPROACH WITHIN THE HAIRLINE HAD BEEN FOLLOWED.

THE RISK OF COMPLICATIONS DUE TO BLEEDING AND NERVE DAMAGE ARE SLIGHTLY GREATER THAN IN THE FIRST TIME FACE LIFT. BLEEDING IS SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY BECAUSE OF THE SCARRING FROM THE FIRST OPERATION (WHEN ONE CUTS THROUGH SCAR TISSUE IT ALWAYS BLEEDS MUCH MORE THAN UNSCARRED TISSUE). THUS THERE IS A SLIGHTLY HIGHER RISK OF HAEMATOMA IN A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT THAN IN THE FIRST TIME. THE COMMONEST NERVE INJURY IN FACE LIFTING IS DAMAGE TO THE GREATER AURICULAR NERVE WHICH IS THE NERVE SUPPLYING FEELING TO THE LOWER HALF OF THE EAR. THIS NERVE LIES VERY CLOSE UNDERNEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SKIN IN THE UPPER PART OF THE NECK. IT IS SOMETIMES DAMAGED IN THE FIRST OPERATION WITHOUT THE PATIENT REALISING BUT THERE MAY WELL BE SCARRING AROUND IT AND FURTHER DAMAGE OCCURS IN THE SECOND OPERATION AND SO THE PATIENT MAY SUDDENLY NOTICE THAT THEY HAVE LOST FEELING IN THE LOWER HALF OF THE EAR. FORTUNATELY, THIS IS A RELATIVELY UNCOMMON PROBLEM AND I HAVE ONLY COME ACROSS ONE CASE OF THIS IN MY OWN EXPERIENCE.

A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT IS OFTEN DONE BY A SURGEON DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE WHO DID THE FIRST FACE LIFT WHICH MEANS THAT THE SECOND TIME SURGEON DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE FACE WAS LIKE BEFORE THE FIRST FACE LIFT AND WHAT PROBLEMS THE FIRST SURGEON MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED. THE SECOND SURGEON WON'T KNOW HOW MUCH OR HOW LITTLE LIPOSUCTION MAY HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT OR WHETHER LIPO-INJECTION WAS USED. IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE OPERATION NOTE FROM THE FIRST OPERATION THIS MIGHT WELL BE HELPFUL AND SO IF THE PATIENT HAS THE DETAILS OF THEIR OPERATION OR THE DETAILS OF THE SURGEON WHO COULD BE CONTACTED THIS IT MAY BE WORTHWHILE OBTAINING THE OPERATION NOTE FROM THE FIRST OPERATION. IF THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF LIPOSUCTION IN THE FIRST OPERATION THERE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE A LOT OF SCARRING IN THE NECK WHICH MAKES IMPROVEMENT IN THE NECK THE SECOND TIME ROUND SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DIFFICULT. PATIENTS WANTING A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT ARE OFTEN REQUESTING FURTHER TIGHTENING OF THE SKIN IN THE NECK AND THIS MAY BE TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE SCAR TISSUE, THE INCREASED RISK OF BLEEDING AND THE THINNESS OF THE SKIN OCCURRING AFTER THE FIRST LIFT.

IF THE PATIENT HAD A VERY EASY RIDE THROUGH THE FIRST OPERATION AND ENCOUNTERED NO PARTICULAR PROBLEMS WITH MINIMAL PAIN, EASY RECOVERY AND VERY LITTLE BRUISING THEN OF COURSE THEY MAY WELL ASSUME THAT THEY CAN EXPECT EXACTLY THE SAME THE SECOND TIME ROUND. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS ISN'T ALWAYS THE CASE FOR THE REASONS GIVEN ABOVE.

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IN MY EXPERIENCE VERY FEW PATIENTS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS FROM FACE LIFTING BUT LOTS OF PATIENTS HAVE MINOR PROBLEMS WHICH MAY NIGGLE. MOST PATIENTS ARE RECOVERED SUFFICIENTLY TO SOCIALISE AND CARRY OUT NORMAL DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES WITHIN 2 TO 3 WEEKS AND MOST PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO GO ON HOLIDAY WITH CONFIDENCE WITHIN 4 WEEKS.

THE SCARS FROM THE OPERATION WILL REMAIN NOTICEABLY RED FOR A MONTH TO 2 MONTHS BUT NEED TO BE HIDDEN WITH MAKE-UP OR USE OF A HAIRSTYLE WHICH COVERS THE SCARS IN FRONT AND BEHIND THE EARS.

IF A PERSON IS UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO DEVELOP A HAEMATOMA, WHICH OCCURS IN BETWEEN 1 IN 20 AND 1 IN 30 CASES, THEN VERY FEW PATIENTS SUFFER SERIOUS LONG-TERM PROBLEMS FROM THIS BUT THEY MAY REMAIN BRUISED LOOKING FOR LONGER THAN USUAL, IE 3 WEEKS PLUS.

I AM NOT IN ANY WAY TRYING TO PUT PEOPLE OFF FROM HAVING A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT. IT IS GENERALLY A VERY WORTHWHILE OPERATION BUT PATIENTS HAVE TO REALISE THAT BECAUSE OF THE LOSS OF ELASTICITY AND THE OVERALL AGING PROCESSES WITHIN THE SKIN IT IS NOT LIKELY TO LAST AS EFFECTIVELY AS THE FIRST TIME FACE LIFT DID. WHEREAS MOST FACE LIFTS LAST FOR BETWEEN 5 TO 10 YEARS AFTER THE FIRST OPERATION THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO LAST AS LONG WITH A SECOND ONE AND WHEREAS AFTER THE FIRST OPERATION THEY ARE NOT VERY LIKELY TO NEED FILLERS OR CHEMICAL PEELS OR LASER TREATMENT OF THE SKIN THEY ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO BENEFIT FROM THESE THINGS AFTER THE SECOND OPERATION.

I SHOULD REMIND THE READER THAT A FACE LIFT NEVER IMPROVES THE APPEARANCE OF THE SKIN OF THE UPPER AND LOWER LIPS BECAUSE THE PULL OF THE FACE LIFT NEVER REACHES AS FAR AS THIS AREA, EITHER IN THE FIRST OR THE SECOND OPERATION. AFTER THE FIRST OPERATION FINE WRINKLES ARE SOMETIMES IMPROVED QUITE DRAMATICALLY VIA CHEMICAL PEEL OR LIGHT LASERING AND THEN THE WRINKLES HAVE BECOME DEEPER AND MORE INGRAINED BY THE TIME THEY NEED A SECOND FACE LIFT AND THESE PROCEDURES AREN'T AS EFFECTIVE THE SECOND TIME ROUND. THE MAIN MESSAGE IS YES, GO AHEAD WITH A SECOND TIME FACE LIFT BUT DON'T EXPECT TO GET AS GOOD A RESULT AS YOU HAD THE FIRST TIME ROUND.

**MR H P HENDERSON, FRCS  
CONSULTANT PLASTIC SURGEON**

MOBILE: 0797 164 3177 (EMERGENCIES ONLY)  
E-MAIL: HUGH.H@HOME.GB.COM OR MICHELE.GANGAR@SPIREHEALTHCARE.COM

SECRETARY: 0116 265 3043 (SPIRE LEICESTER HOSPITAL)  
HOSPITALS: SPIRE LEICESTER HOSPITAL  
LEICESTER NUFFIELD HOSPITAL  
FITZWILLIAM HOSPITAL, PETERBOROUGH  
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