

# Face Fixers

A perfect face that stays perfect at any cost is something many people yearn for. But, thanks to advances in the field of cosmetic surgery, those who believe they have a less than ideal face can take recourse to the surgeon's scalpel.

Ruqya Kahn meets an expert to find out the options available.

Mention the ageing and many people immediately furrow their brow. And there we are: the lines that furrow the forehead when you raise your eyebrows, the crow's feet that appear when you squint and the creases between the eyebrows when you frown are caused by tension in the underlying muscles, which contracts and squeeze the skin like an accordion. And, as you age, it all adds up to sagging or wrinkled skin. Folds and fats deposits appear around the neck, and deep creases form between the nose and mouth the jaw line grows "jowly" and slack. Heredity, poor diet, smoking, sun or obesity may contribute to early or severe skin problems.

Now, the good news: age is just a state of mind and ageing or at least its symptoms, a treatable condition.

Dr. Farhat Bokhari, a specialist plastic surgeon at Euro gulf Medical Centre, Dubai, with 12 years of experience in cosmetic surgery, says there are plenty of options available.

"Skin ageing is a gradual and continuous process that begins even before the first wrinkles become visible. The skin and muscles work hand in hand but, with time, there is a tiff between them and the skin starts to sag. It loses its suppleness due to reduced moisture retaining ability. Also, there is lesser blood circulation and diminished collagen content. The skin gets drier, thinner and calls for more attention and intensive caring as we age," explains the doctor.

"Surgery to repair sagging, drooping, and wrinkled skin of the face and neck is a norm now. But cosmetic surgery does not mean just facelifts. To promote healthy ageing, you have a wide range of options - from biomarker software ageing tests to eating a better diet. It's important to distinguish between the legitimate products that offer proven benefits and the elixirs that make seductive, unsupported claims, and may carry serious risks," he stresses

## 1. Soft Options

Perlane and Restylane are injectable forms of hyaluronic acid, which come in pre-filled syringes. They are injected into the superficial part of the dermis, causing the line to lift and soften. They may be injected into the nasolabial line (extending from the side of the nose to angle of the mouth) to remove the vertical lines that come with age. They can also be used to add volume to lips that have lost plumpness or injected into the cheek area to plump up the cheeks.

- Cost: about Dh 1,500 - 3,500 per syringe. The procedure takes about half an hour.

**Botox** is a neurotoxin produced from clostridium botulinum bacteria, which is administered in small injections. They were originally stated to treat neurological disorders; today, Botox injections are widely used to remove facial lines, especially frown lines, "crow's feet", and forehead lines. "Botox shot" is the term most widely used to describe the procedure of administering Botox treatment. The effects of the treatment are not permanent, it lasts for anywhere from three to eight months it is relatively painless procedure and takes about 10 minutes.

- Cost: Between Dhs 1,500 and Dhs 2,000 for treatment.

**Glycolic peel:** An exfoliating technique that uses glycolic acid to treat fine lines, even out skin tone and smooth away acne scars. It stimulates cell metabolism, increasing the skin's natural functions. Downside: it can irritate the skin and you have to under go a series of treatments for the right effect.

- Cost: Between Dhs 300 and Dhs 2,000 per treatment.

**Cow collagen:** Has been in the market for many years. It is relatively inexpensive and includes a local anesthetic in its suspension so it causes little discomfort. Some people may be allergic to bovine products so an allergy test is recommended before use.

The effect lasts for about 3-6months (zyderm) and 6-9months (Zyplast).

- Cost: Dhs 2,000 - Dhs 5,000 per treatment.

**Liquid Silicone:** Is permanent with relatively low long-term cost. It does not have an anesthetic in its suspension so it may cause discomfort. It could even migrate to other sites and cause allergic reactions.

**Artecoll** (Collagen combined with acrylic beads) Lasts for years and could be permanent. But it is less preferred because there could be adverse reaction. Beads sometimes show through the skin or migrate to other areas of the body. There is also a possibility of hard nodules forming around the beads and the post - procedure healing period could be long.

**Fat transfer:** The best option in fillers since there is no chance of allergy or rejection because it comes from your own body. It is rather long - lasting if not permanent. However, longevity could vary and it can be costly “staying power” is extremely variable.

- Cost: about Dhs 3,000 to Dhs 5,000.

Non - surgical facelifts: Tone the muscles of the face and stimulate circulation. Immediate improvement in texture and tone of the skin can be seen, but results are temporary and regular maintenance is a must. It includes electronic toning facials.

- Cost: Approximately Dhs 1,000 to Dhs 5,000

### **Forehead Lift**

The forehead region can be having three main defects - frown lines, receding hairline and sagging brow. For a receding hairline, which occurs more commonly in men than women, micro or mini grafts are done. Hair from the back of the head is transplanted one by one to bring the hairline, giving it a natural look.

If the patient wants to treat lines that are relatively less, non - surgical options are preferred. Either mild peels/Fillers like Botox can be administered. When the patient's condition is not rectifiable with soft options, the doctor may do a brow lift.

A **Brow lift:** Helps people with a sagging forehead or eyebrows that hang too low and too close to the eyes. It improves drooping eyelids, frown/ forehead lines, and “crow's feet”.

For best results, the brow lift is often combined with other procedures like eyelid surgery or Rhytidectomy. Surgeons who perform brow lift surgery use multiple techniques, and the best procedure is selected based upon the patient's needs.

The surgery usually lasts from to three hours, and can often be performed on an outpatient basis. Local or general anesthesia may be selected. Incisions are concealed within or at the hairline. “Brow lift surgery used to be a very drastic procedure. But now the procedure is done on an out patient basis under general anesthesia,” says Farhat.

“Depending on the technique and patient, these surgeries may remove excess skin / over- active muscles causing wrinkling.”

Pain and discomfort following the surgery are typically controlled with oral pain medication, and are not severe. The patient can usually shampoo the hair within a day or two after the surgery.

- Cost: Dhs 10,000 to 14,000.

### **Eye Surgery**

With eyes the problems may be laxity of the upper eyelid skin, loss of the natural upper eyelid crease, crow's feet, loose skin of the lower eyelids ( bags) and narrowing or puffiness( due to accumulation of fats) around the eyes. An eyelid lift is advised. It is done on an outpatient basis under d\sedation and local or general anesthesia. Depending on the patient's needs the apt procedure is selected.

- Cost: Dhs 3,000 - Dhs8, 000

“There is a lot that cosmetic surgery can do; from creating an eyelid crease to changing the shape of the eyes. The eyelids are just two folds of the skin and cartilage covering the eye, attached to the face's bone structure

with two ligaments (canthi) at the corners. If the canthus is repositioned the shape of the eye can be changed.” explained by Dr.Farhat. “For crow’s feet, in relatively younger patients Botox helps. But there is not much that can be done to help with dark circles: because the skin is really sensitive. A real mild glycolic acid treatment can be done for a short duration.”

### **Nose Reshaping**

Nose jobs (Rhinoplasty) were the hot topic even before Botox came into the picture. The nose may either be too large, Broads or with a wide tip. At times the abnormal appearance may be due to birth defects, injury or disease; the patient may even have nasal obstruction due to a deviated nasal septum (divider between the two sides of the nose).

To reshape the nose, either implants are used or the bone structure is narrowed, depending on the type of restructuring. Mostly silicone or polyethylene implants are used. Hhydroxyapatite implants can be used as well.

The procedure is done on an outpatient basis under sedation and local or general anesthesia. In Septoplasty, which is performed on the patient with a deviated septum, the crooked septum is straightened through incision inside the nose.

In standard Rhinoplasty, incisions are made inside the nostrils. The nasal bones, cartilage and soft tissues are reshaped to improve the external contour. In open Rhinoplasty, which is frequently used for difficult or larger noses, one external incision is made across the columella (strut between the nostrils). Bones, cartilage and soft tissues are reshaped under direct vision.

In tip-plasty, which is done when only the tip is abnormal, either a standard or external approach is used to modify the shape. Large nostrils may be reduced through tiny incisions at the outer base of the nostrils with either type of Rhinoplasty

For the patient with an operated nose, the initial swelling is usually gone in 10-20 days. It may take six months to years or longer for the swelling to disappear. Final result is evident in 12-14 months, which is the time necessary for complete tissue softening.

- Cost: Dhs 8,000 - Dhs 15,000.

### **Cheeks**

The perfect face is oval-shaped. The cheeks play a major role in determining the shape. If they are too plump or too hollow, the face, to some, may not seem as appealing. Buccal fat pad excision, which involves excision of excess cheek fat through a small incision on the inside of the cheek, is done to narrow the midface region.

Cheek implants may be used to increase the prominence of these areas. The procedure can be performed from an incision inside the mouth, and then creating a pocket where the implant can be placed. The pain is controlled by oral pain medication.

- Cost: Dhs 8,000 - Dhs 12,000

### **Lips**

Lips may be either too plump or slender. In the latter case, they can be plumped up using fillers. Collagen lasts for 3-4months and treatment must be repeated after 5-6months. Fats fillers are a good choice because the risk of allergic reaction is minimal if not nil. Gortex is filler is used in this region but there are chances of infection and also that it may erode and show.

Another problem that can arise with the lip area is lipstick bleed lines. Laser and chemical peels can improve the condition. If the lines are really deep, phenol peel is used. But if proper post- treatment care is not maintained it may get patchy due to pigmentation.

If the lips are too plump, excess fat can be removed by making an incision on the back edge of the lip, thus effectively hiding the resulting scar. The area generally heals in about a week, and the discomfort is minimal.

- Cost: Dhs 1,500 - Dhs 5,000

### **Chin**

Dr Farhat explains, “There are general parameters by which the facial features are calculated. The face should be divided into three sections proportionately. If a line is drawn from the base of the nose extended to the lips and

chin, the features should all be aligned.” If the chin is protruding or receding, it could look odd.

Chin augmentation or chin reduction can balance the appearance of a receding or protruding chin respectively. It's done either by moving the chin bone and fixing it into a new position or by inserting an implant through the lower lip or gum or through an external incision underneath the chin.

Pain is moderate and swelling usually subsides significantly in two weeks, but may persist for a few weeks.

- Cost: Dhs 8,000 - 15,000

### **Ears**

Patients who have ears that either sticks out too far from the side of the head or with an unusual or undesirable shape can opt for ear pinning. The procedure is usually performed on an outpatient basis under sedation and local or general anesthesia.

- Cost: 7,000 - Dhs 10,000

### **Neck**

With age, the skin of the neck loses its contour and youthful beauty. There may be localized deposits of fat in the front portion of the neck, under the chin: muscles may slacken under the chin and sagging skin folds may show up, too. A neck lift is what Dr. Farhat advises.

The procedure is done on an outpatient basis under sedation and local or general anesthesia. It requires an incision under the chin. Fat is suctioned or directly excised, muscles are tightened, and a small amount of skin may be removed, all depending on individual findings. The final result is evident 1- 3 months.

- Cost: Dhs 10,000 - Dhs 15,000.

### **Going all the way: Facelift and Neck lift**

A facelift (rhytidectomy) rejuvenates the ageing face and neck by removing excess skin and tightening the deeper facial tissues this is an effective procedure for sagging necklines and jowl, and deep wrinkling of the face. To obtain best results, rhytidectomy is often combined with other procedure such as brow lift, eyelid surgery or liposuction under the chin facelifts range in size from “mini” to “standard” depending on the location and extent of the skin laxity, but this varies from patient to patient.

Surgery can be performed under local or general anesthesia, and usually lasts several hours. During surgery, the surgeon separates the skin from the face, tightens the deeper tissues and redrapes the skin in a pleasing manner. Excess skin and tissue is removed. Small drainage tubes may be placed under the skin usually removed excess fluid, and these are usually removed in one or two days. Most patients resume household activities within a few days. The final result is evident in 4-6 weeks or sooner.

- Cost: Dhs15, 000 - Dhs 20,000

## **POST - OPERATIVE CARE**

**All cosmetic surgery** procedure is not permanent. They have limitations as to how long the change will last, depending on skin type, age, the surgeon's technique and post - operative care

The sun is the all time greatest skin age: so stay out of the sun.

16 If you tan, the scar tissue from an operation remains pale, making it very noticeable.

17 Stop smoking

18 Have nutrient- rich foods such as berries and salmon (which contains omega- 3) to feed your skin.

19 Aid your body to heal fast by taking one or two ‘skin friendly’ vitamin supplements - vitamin E, evening primrose oil, imedeem or nutrideem.

“Many surgery centers use visuals to help the patient understand what to expect after the operation. However, it is best that one does not pin hopes too much on the visual because, in most major operative procedure, the final result does not come about until a certain periods,” says Dr.Farhat.

“Cosmetic surgery has gained ground in the past few years. There was a time when only the elderly considered a face job but now it's normal for a 30+ person to come in for regular cosmetic touch - ups.”