

TULSA SURGICAL ARTS

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Facelift (Face and Neck Lift)

PLAIN-LANGUAGE PATIENT GUIDE

What this surgery is

A facelift lifts the lower face and the neck. It treats loose skin, jowls, and deep folds around the mouth. The surgeon lifts the deeper layer of the face, not just the skin.

That deeper lift gives a natural look that lasts longer. A facelift does not stop aging. It sets the clock back. It does not change the eyes or the brow. Those need other steps.

What happens during it

1. You get anesthesia (medicine that makes you sleep).
2. The surgeon makes cuts hidden in the hairline and around each ear. A small cut may be made under the chin.
3. The deeper support layer of the face is lifted and secured with stitches.
4. Loose neck muscle bands are tightened through the chin cut when needed.
5. Extra skin is trimmed away. The skin is laid back down without tension.
6. The cuts are closed with fine stitches. A soft head wrap goes on.
7. Surgery takes a few hours. Most people go home the same day with an adult to help.

Main risks

Every surgery has risks. Here are the main ones for this surgery, in plain words. We will go over all of them with you in person.

- A patch of hair loss near the scars. It often grows back.
- Weakness in part of the face. A nerve can be bruised. This almost always recovers. Lasting weakness is rare.
- Skin healing problems behind the ears. The risk is much higher if you smoke.
- A pocket of blood under the skin (called a hematoma). It may need quick drainage.

- Bleeding. Some bleeding can need another trip to the operating room.
- Infection. Signs are spreading redness, warmth, pus, or fever.
- Scars. Every cut leaves a scar. Most fade over a year. Some stay raised or wide.
- Numb skin near the cuts. Feeling usually returns over months. Small areas can stay numb.
- Blood clots in the legs. A clot can travel to the lungs. That is an emergency.
- Problems from anesthesia (the medicine that makes you sleep). These are rare in healthy people.
- Uneven results. The two sides of the body are never a perfect match.
- The need for another surgery to fix a problem or improve the result.

What recovery is like

First few days

Swelling and bruising peak. Keep your head raised, even while you sleep. Walk a little every few hours.

One week

Most stitches come out. Bruising starts to fade. You can shower and wash your hair.

Two weeks

Most people feel fine in public with light makeup. Desk work is usually fine.

Six weeks

You can return to full exercise. Numb areas keep waking up for months.

One year

Scars fade to thin, pale lines hidden around the ears.

When to call us right away

In any emergency, call 911 first.

Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department now — do not drive yourself, do not wait:

- Chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath, or trouble breathing.

- Fainting, sudden confusion, or weakness on one side of the body.
- One side of your face swells fast and feels tight or very painful.
- You have chest pain or trouble breathing.
- One leg swells, or one calf hurts more than the other.
- Blood soaks a bandage and does not slow down with gentle pressure.

Otherwise call us at 918-392-7900, day or night, if:

- You have a fever of 101.5°F (38.6°C) or higher.
- Redness spreads out from a cut, or you see pus.
- Your pain gets much worse instead of better.
- A wound pulls open, or stitches come apart.

Reviewed and approved by Austin Kluis, MD — 2026-08-23.

This guide is for general learning only. It is not medical advice for you. Your plan may differ. Always follow the instructions your surgeon gives you.