

# Turning back the Clock

Beauty starts with your skin. Looking after it is imperative, but for some, anti-wrinkle creams and serums just aren't cutting it. **umuma** speaks to Dr Shahram Sajjadi, a European Board Certified plastic, reconstructive and aesthetic surgeon, who helps to restore a youthful look on many faces.

By Esther Mumbua

**A**s a woman, looking in the mirror and seeing a toned, bright and youthful face looking back at you is the dream for most. We all strive to look good physically, otherwise we would not be spending the better part of "getting ready" in front of the mirror trying to look our best.

Enter facial rejuvenation. This procedure, which is very popular in the UAE and other developed countries across the globe, has become a staple for many women who want their youthful look back as well as those who want to change a thing or two about their faces.

One study from the University of Toronto found that a facelift and neck-lift could take off up to nine years from the actual age of the person who undergoes the procedure. Talk about looking a decade younger.



**Dr Shahram Sajjadi**  
Plastic Surgeon

Another study by European researchers found that post-op, plastic surgery patients generally report a boost in self-confidence and enjoyment of life. According to this study, the participants who opted for the procedure, of which 87% were women, felt healthier, were less anxious, had developed more self-esteem and found the operated body feature in particular, but also their

body as a whole, more attractive. According to Dr Shahram Sajjadi, facial rejuvenation, as its name implies, basically means making the face look younger. He adds: "the face is our identity and we are most known by our faces. It's our faces that express our feelings our happiness, tiredness even gaining and losing weight shows first on our faces. Furthermore gravity and years show their effect very prominently on our faces."

Since our faces contain our eyes which are windows to our souls, explains the surgeon, our eyebrows have a very important function in our facial expressions. "Our faces are built on a bony structure, covered with layers of fat, muscles, and vessels all of which is covered by skin.

So it's a combination of different tissues, and time affects all of them, with a similar overall pattern but very individual in every single person," adds Dr Shahram noting that it is amazing that apart from very rare cases of identical twins, everybody looks different and actually everybody's face changes with time. The detailed explanation about the face as an important functional and aesthetic unit of a person, leads to the conclusion that facial aging or even better to say, the changes that time sets on our face, does not take place due to a single tissue only, but by multiple ones.

## Aesthetic or medical?

"To make the face look younger is a discipline in plastic surgery and aesthetic medicine which is called, as mentioned, facial rejuvenation," says Dr Shahram adding that these are procedures and/or operations with the aim to reverse the effects of time on the face. These processes, according to the Doctor, can be as



## The magic of facial rejuvenation.

### Before

After careful assessment which included comparisons of her pictures in her youth. This patient wanted to have a facelift.



### After

Dr Sajjadi says that he realized that what she would mostly benefit from was fat transfer around her eyes rather than a face lift. The second picture shows how she looked after the procedure.



simple as office procedures such as Botulinum toxin injections (commonly known as Botox), filler injections, and skin rejuvenation techniques (so called non-invasive or non-surgical or aesthetic procedures) to more complex aesthetic operations like fat transfer, different kinds of face lifts and/or neck lifts (invasive or surgical procedures).

## The procedure

"The decision to undergo facial rejuvenation is made by the patient after a consultation which highlights what variations time has made on that particular person's face," states Dr Shahram, adding that afterwards they discuss the procedures or operations that can correct or reverse these effects. "The reasons that most people choose facial rejuvenation also differs considerably but according to Dr Shahram, most of them generally would like to look younger or at

least fresher. "Some patients have a concrete procedure in mind and some patients would just like to look better."

Take the case of Michelle. 30 year-old Michelle Du Plessis decided to undergo facial rejuvenation because of the comments people were making about the lines on her face. "I had very deep lines on my forehead and on a daily basis people used to comment on my face, telling me that it is a pity my lines are so deep," she says noting that this made her feel embarrassed about it. In addition, she used to wear hairstyles that would hide her face.

After undergoing facial rejuvenation, she says that she looks her age now which makes her very happy, and has nothing to hide anymore. "The procedure not only changed the look on my forehead, but my confidence as well. I can face people now without wondering if they are staring at lines on my face."

## Who can "lift" their face?

Since the major reason for facial rejuvenation is to make one look younger, Dr Shahram notes that any adult can have some form of the procedure done on him or her. "The youngest face lift I have done so far was on a 27 year old girl who after losing too much weight and removing her infected cheek implants, her skin was left sagging a bit too much," he says adding that the oldest face lift he did was on a 76-year-old lady. "So aging is really not a big factor rather the type of facial rejuvenation has to be very much tailored to the need of that person."

According to the Doctor, facial rejuvenation works through a wide range of effects. "To sum it up, the procedure is done through blocking the muscles that cause wrinkles to appear or act in the general direction

of gravity and pulls an area further down causing sagging," he explains. "In order to achieve that youthful look, the plastic surgeon fills the areas that by time have undergone either bone or soft tissue (fat and muscle) absorption or the so-called deflation in technical terms, restoring the sagging muscles and soft tissues and removing excess skin." After the patient has made the big decision to have a facial rejuvenation, before the procedure starts, and again depending on the procedure, there are a few precautions one should take.

"For example there is not much to do before and after a routine Botulinum toxin (Botox) or filler injection," advises Dr Shahram adding that if one is undergoing a facelift, specific instructions will be given on the preoperative consultations. The outcome, when done with detailed care and communication by a professional and certified plastic surgeon, are great and life changing.

For instance, 36-year-old Carol Kahel (not her real name) decided to undergo a facial rejuvenation because, in her opinion, the procedure has better results than any other skin care treatment available in the market.

"I wanted to get rid of my then-visible wrinkle lines on my face and afterwards I felt happy, and satisfied because it did its job," says Carol adding that although the procedure has not changed who she really is, it has given her more confidence. "The lines are now one less thing to worry about." For 49-year-old Mary Suraya (not her real name), her main reason for having a facelift was to look more refreshed and not look so old and tired.

"The results were very good because now I look more fresh and youthful without looking like I have had plastic surgery," she quips adding that she is now happier, satisfied and has more confidence. "I am getting more

attention and my friends think I look fresh and glowing! My doctor is a gem and took very good care of me before and after."

## What you should know

Dr Shahram notes that the procedures are not necessarily painful for those considering turning back the clock. "Botulinum toxin (Botox) injections are done using very tiny needles with a number of techniques in place to numb the area.

"On the other hand, fillers are injected generally under local anesthesia so they are not painful, while local anesthetic creams are used before laser skin rejuvenations," says he adding that when it comes to face lifts, they are not extensively painful but one might experience some dull pain for one or two days. "In such cases, painkillers are prescribed."