

COSMETIC TOWN JOURNAL

Lip Lift

A lip lift shortens an abnormally long upper lip in order to enhance the smile and the dental aesthetics. It rejuvenates the lip area by enhancing the lip and giving a firmer, plumper lip by reducing the length of the lip. The procedure is necessary for some patients because the columella, AKA the area under the nose to the end of the red part of the lip, lengthens on some people as they age. When a person is at rest, female and male patients (especially females) often have their mouth half open while not smiling and others should be able to see a couple of millimeters of their incisor teeth. When they smile, others should see a couple millimeters of their gum tissue. Some people have a lip that is very long and no teeth are visible when they are at rest and it looks like they have dentures. This can be caused by the fact that their upper jaw has not grown down far enough. It could also be because they have short teeth. Whatever the reason, patients who desire a lip lift have a long upper lip and want to shorten it.

Am I a Good Candidate for a Lip Lift?

People that are **GOOD CANDIDATES** for a lip lift include:

- Patients with an upper lip that is elongated thanks to a thinning of the upper jawbone or gravity
- People with an excessively long upper lip they feel is not aesthetically pleasing
- Patients who are older and have a longer lip thanks to atrophy of the muscle as well as changes in the bone
- Those who have teeth that do not show when they smile
- Patients with thin and flat lips

In many respects, a lip lift is an ideal anti-aging procedure for candidates with a long lip that needs reducing to rejuvenate the area.

Patients who are **NOT IDEAL CANDIDATES** for the procedure:

- Patients with a full upper lip because the lip lift rotates the upper lip in an outward manner so it might make the upper lip look too large
- People with an upper lip that is not excessively long/longer than normal for their age range
- Patients who have teeth with a couple of millimeters of gum tissue that is easily visible while they are at rest.

How is a Lip Lift Performed?

A lip lift elevates the upper lip position and creates a more youthful and relaxed smile. There are two types of lip lifts:

1. **Upper Lip Lift** – This technique is performed in order to shorten the distance of skin between the base of the nose and the upper lip. It also increases the amount of the pink lip and teeth that can be seen while giving the lips a fuller and youthful appearance.
2. **Corner Lip Lift** – Performed on the edges of the mouth of patients who feel like they have a frown that is permanent because the corner of the mouth is turned down.

The two procedures can be performed together to improve the distance between the base of the nose and the upper lip as well as

eliminate the look of a “permanent frown”.

- **Lip Lift Procedure** – A lip lift is performed under local anesthesia and is an outpatient procedure. An incision is placed under the nose before a small strip of tissue and skin is removed by the surgeon. The lip is then lifted to its new position while also exposing a larger portion of the pink part of the lip as well as the teeth. The amount of skin that is removed varies per patient. Only the skin and tissue is removed to make the lip shorter during the procedure while the nerves and muscles are left untouched.

A lip lift is sometimes called a bullhorn procedure because the geometry of the skin incision looks like a set of horns on a bull. It also looks like a handlebar mustache since the lip lift excises a strip of skin under the nose. When the edges are put back together, it actually rolls the upper lip out more and gives a fuller, plumper lip that shows more of the pink part of the lip.

- **Corner Lip Lift** – A corner lip lift is an outpatient procedure performed under local anesthesia. It is also called a “grin lift” or a “smile lift” since it makes changes to the corner of the mouth that sort of folds in and turns down to become a firm frown. The corner lift lip takes a little triangle of tissue out from the corner of the lips and turns it upwards. It is not designed to give the patient a smile but it does have that effect. It is designed to take away some of the excess overlap in the corner of the mouth.

Alternative Procedures

- **Lip Reduction** – Not every person wants larger lips. Many patients want lip reduction and it is primarily ethnic patients that want smaller lips. This is known as an eclipse lip lift. Some patients have hereditarily, and racially, larger lips so the surgeon takes a strip out of the center of the lip and removes some of the deeper tissue to reduce the size of the lip. People with really big lips show a tremendous amount of the pink portion of their lip. A lip reduction retracts the lips and pulls them in. It is the opposite effect of using fillers when the lips are injected to reveal more of the pink. In this case, the patient is trying to see less pink.
- **Lip Fillers** – As recently as 15 or 20 years ago, doctors only had collagen to use as filler. These days, there are a variety of fillers available and doctors can reverse them if patients do not like the results. Some of the fillers that can be used on the lips are Juvederm and Restylane. Patients that want some plumping and outline can use fillers to achieve their goals. They want the corners of their mouth turned up and they want their lipstick lines improved. The doctor injecting the filler must be careful because too much filler can push the long upper lip outward instead of upwards and result in “duck lips”.

What is the Cost of a Lip Lift?

The cost of a lip lift depends on the amount of work performed on a patient as each lip lift surgery is customized for the individual patient. It also depends on the type of lip lift and any fees charged by the doctor or the facility. In general, the price is in the range of \$1000-\$4500.

Recovery and Downtime

The **RECOVERY** time is not very long because it is not a painful procedure. If an average patient has it done on a Friday, the stitches would be in for about a week. Many people go back to work 3 or 4 days later with their flesh-colored sutures. A patient does not need to take more than a week off.

Patients need to be careful with their oral function. They do not want to engage in a lot of laughing, pulling on their lip or sucking through a straw. Also, soft foods should be consumed for the first few days after a lip lift.

A majority of the swelling will resolve in a week or two and all of the swelling should be gone within a month.

Results

The results are mostly permanent because the patient is having skin and tissue removed. There are cases of patients having a relapse and their lip returning to its previous appearance but this rarely happens. Both the patient and the doctor need to be conservative when planning a lip lift in order to keep the final results aesthetically pleasing.

The design of the incision is extremely important when it comes to the final results. The incision has to be right between the nostrils and the upper lip because, if it is higher or lower, it will be noticeable. In that area, it does not scar gracefully on some people. If the scar is not the way the patient wants it, the doctor can go back and laser resurface the scar.

Limitations and Risks of a Lip Lift

A lip lift can make a positive change in the appearance of a patient but there are some **LIMITATIONS**:

- **There is a limit to how much of a lip lift can be done on certain patients.** For example, some people have a gummy smile and they show a lot of teeth and gum. If a lip lift is done on that patient, all a person would see is teeth. Patients have to be careful to choose a procedure that will help them rather than harm them.
- There is also a **limit to the amount of aggressive surgery that can be performed** in the lip lift area. Some doctors do a lot of work on the underlying muscle when they do a lip lift. This can lead to abnormal animation in function because of too much aggressive surgery in that area. Plus, the scar can be very visible if this happens.
- There is a **limit to how much of a change can be made with fillers** since doctors cannot make the lip shorter using fillers. Making the lip shorter has to be performed surgically by the doctor.

Some of the most common **RISKS** include:

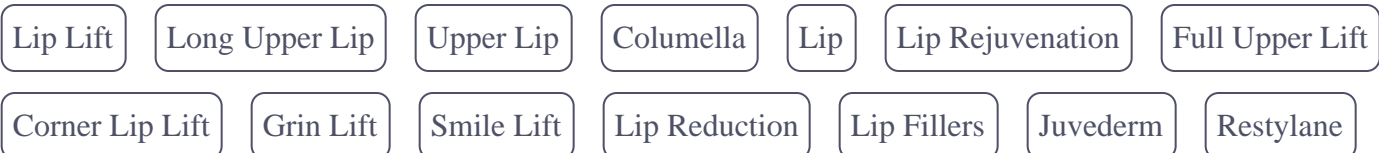
- **Scarring**
- **Infection**
- **Asymmetrical lips after the final results are visible**
- **Swelling**
- **Bruising**

Lip Lifts are not for Everyone

A lip lift is not something that every patient can undergo. It all comes down to examining the patient and choosing the right approach to achieve the desired results. Patients should schedule a consultation with a board-certified doctor in order to determine if a lip lift is the right choice for them, or if the results can be achieved by an alternative method.

Written by Cosmetic Town Editorial Team - MA

Based on an exclusive interview with Joe Niamtu, MD in Midlothian, VA



□ [Joe Niamtu, DMD](#)

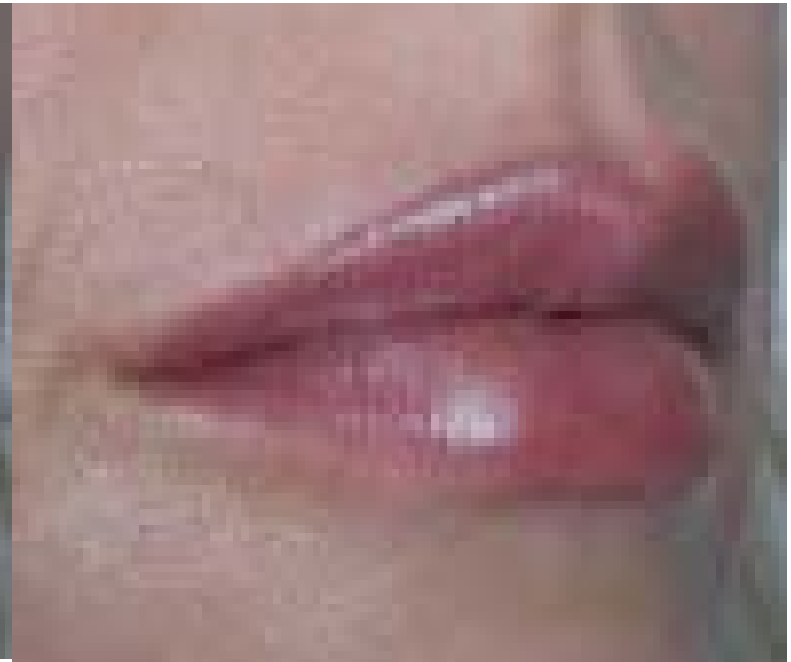
□ December 02, 2015

Article Updated on October 11, 2017

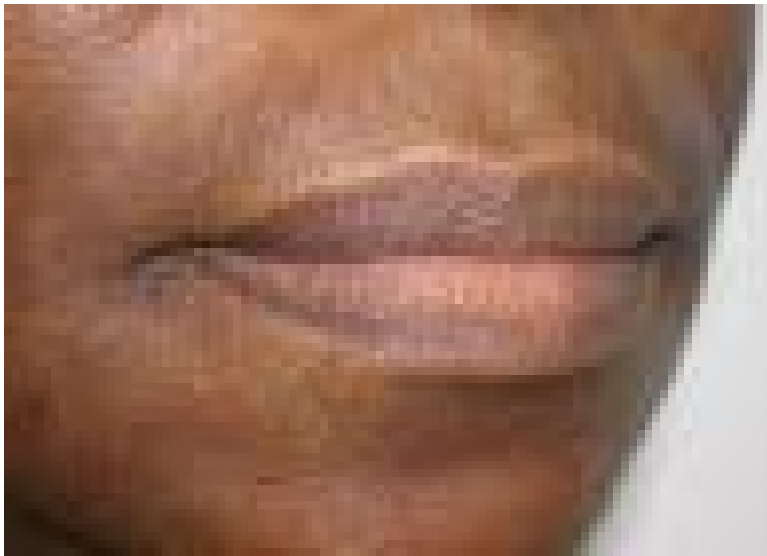
RELATED GALLERIES



LIP LIFT



LIP FILLERS



LIP REDUCTION

RELATED ARTICLES

[Fat Grafting in Lip Augmentation - Misbah Khan, MD](#)

[Types of Breast Lifts - Steve Laverson, MD](#)

[Lip Fillers for Young and Old Patients - Francis Palmer, MD](#)

[Mini Neck Lift - Mike Majmundar, MD](#)

[ABOUT](#) | [CONTACT](#)

© 2017 Cosmetic Town, Inc. All rights
Reserved [Terms of Use](#) & [Privacy Info.](#)

