

WHAT IS A DEEP PLANE FACELIFT? INSIDE THE OLD-SCHOOL PLASTIC SURGERY PROCEDURE

It's been around since the 90s.

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WHAT IS A 'DEEP PLANE FACELIFT'?

According to Melbourne-based plastic surgeon Dr Chris Moss, who is well-versed in modern facelifts techniques, the 'deep plane' approach has actually been around since 1990, when it was devised by a plastic surgeon from Texas named Sam Hamra.

"The original concept was that you operate beneath the supportive layer of the face, in something we call the SMAS (Superficial muscular aponeurotic system) layer, rather than just operating on the skin.

"What surgeons found was that when you pull on the skin you end up getting that tight, operated look and the results didn't last long because skin is naturally elastic. Instead, if you correct the face by operating under the SMAS layer you get longer lasting change. It's definitely more subtle."

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT TO A REGULAR FACELIFT?

While the name 'deep plane' might sound special, Dr Moss says essentially all good facelifts these days are "deep plane" by nature because they operate on the SMAS layer.



"Unfortunately the terminology can be very confusing," Dr Moss says, adding that, typically, the use of the phrase "deep plane" is really just a marketing technique to make a regular facelift sound extra-involved. In reality, however, "the deep plane is no deeper than a proper SMAS facelift," Dr Moss says.

"All dedicated plastic surgeons who do facelifts will do SMAS correction and that SMAS correction is done at the deep plane.

"Going any deeper than the deep plane will mean you hit the facial nerves. Not ideal.

Dr Moss explains that while Dr Jacono might be calling his facelifts "deep plane", he's likely using a more updated, tailored approach that differs from the original method invented in the 1980s, which is now regarded as a less effective, faster, one-size-fits-all approach that requires less expertise and might not work for everyone

WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES OF A 'DEEP PLANE FACELIFT'?
As previously mentioned, the traditional 'deep plane facelift' has fallen out of favour with top surgeons in recent years because it has its limitations.

"The technique that has the brand name 'deep plane' doesn't treat the skin and the SMAS differently, that's the downside," Dr Moss explains, adding that a deep plane facelift pulls the skin and the SMAS in the same direction.

"There are only a few patients where it is appropriate to pull the skin and the SMAS in the same direction. Generally the two things age differently and a good surgeon will know to approach them differently. It has to be customised. A good facelift is not one size fits all, it's made to measure. It's like producing a couture dress. It takes into account how the person has aged, what their anatomy is like and what result they want."

HOW LONG DOES A FACELIFT SURGERY TAKE?

While the original deep plane technique can be completed in under two hours, Dr Moss says most good surgeons will take around four hours to do a proper facelift.

"It's very quick to dissect under the skin if you're lifting everything in one angle," Dr Moss says, "But if you want to correct the upper cheek and mid-face too, then it's routine to spend up to four hours doing a high SMAS facelift."

WHAT'S THE RECOVERY TIME FOR A FACELIFT?

Again, the level of precision in the facelift often dictates the recovery time.

"As a general rule, although this takes longer to do, if the surgery is under the SMAS rather than under the skin then the bruising is reduced and the recovery is quicker level" Dr Moss says.

"For my patients, it's around about seven to 10 days until the stitches are out and they're able to start back to normal everyday activities."