

LIP LIFT

The effects of gravity and relaxation of tissues over time can have the result on the upper lip of making it longer and droop. If the upper lip has the appearance of being elongated and flat, the teeth tend not to show in a normal smile, or there is very little pink mucous membrane of the lip showing, then you may be a candidate for a lip lift.

There are several anatomic features of the lip that deserve mention. The cosmetic appearance is the result of a very important dynamic interplay between several anatomic areas. These include the *underlying dental framework* that supports and gives the fullness to the lips, depending on the teeth and tilt to the teeth, the *muscles* that make up the lip itself or the ones that connect at the corners, the *soft tissues* that suspend and support the lip from the base of the nose, the *volume* of the pink portion of the lip, and the position of the *corners* of the mouth.

The lip lift is a procedure performed under local anesthesia in the outpatient center. It is comfortable and quite well tolerated. The amount of excess length is determined and this width is marked out carefully as an ellipse at the very top of the lip under the nose. This incision hides nicely in the shadows under the nose. The improvement is seen immediately. If the lip lift raises the central portion of the lip a lot, and the corners then look drooping, a corner lift may be needed also.

The corner lift is performed by removing a small triangle of the excess and sagging skin at the corners of the mouth that contribute to sagging. This should only be performed if there is a significant drooping or sagging at the corner. These incisions are designed to be minimal and barely noticeable.

The overall risks are minimal and the incision hides nicely. This procedure allows more pink to show but *does not increase the size* of the pink lip.