

PLASTIC SURGERY

Turn back the clock

A novel ultrasound treatment can now mimic the effects of a facelift without surgery.



Dr Leslie Kuek
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While surgery has always been the mainstay of rejuvenation, advancements in technology now mean that you can get similar effects of a facelift without going under the knife. One example is Ultherapy, a novel non-invasive ultrasound treatment that works from inside to treat the deep layers of skin.

Lift off

Ultherapy uses a special transducer that emits ultrasound waves which are converted into heat energy under the skin. These allow the doctor to deliver the heat energy accurately and precisely to where collagen tissues are.

This in turn triggers the body's regenerative response and stimulates production of new collagen, a natural process known as neocollagenesis. Over

time, the underlying layers of skin become firmer, restoring the skin's surface suppleness and counteracting the effects of time and gravity. Compared to laser treatments that also do their part to rejuvenate skin, Ultherapy gets to the deeper skin layers. Lasers, on the other hand, use light energy to treat superficial skin. However, when used together, these two cosmetic procedures are very compatible and can give a better outcome than just being used alone.

It takes just a single Ultherapy treatment to initiate the regenerative process and the full effect will build gradually over two to three months. A clinical trial by the American Federal Drug Authority (FDA) revealed that nine out of 10 patients had a noticeable, significant lift of the brow line that reduced skin laxity on the eyelid. This resulted in a more open, youthful look to the eyes. Patients also reported firmer and tighter skin in other areas of the face and neck.

The benefits of Ultherapy are that it is non-invasive and gives the doctor a view of the skin's

layers, allowing for precise and accurate treatment and ensuring that the ultrasound energy is delivered to where it will be most beneficial.

Surgery-free facelift


The key advantage for many patients is that Ultherapy has no downtime and patients can go about their normal activities immediately after treatment.

Some patients may experience a little redness of the skin, like a light sunburn or blush, after the treatment, but this typically disappears in a matter of hours. In rare cases, there may be slight puffiness, tingling or tenderness of the skin, but these are mild and temporary side effects.

A typical treatment session for the face and neck will take between 60 and 90 minutes, while a chest treatment takes about 30 minutes. Studies on the effects of treatment show that it lasts about one and a half to two years, but as the normal ageing process continues, patients who wish to extend the effects and 'stop the clock' may consider follow-up treatments after one year.

Ultherapy is most useful in patients who are concerned with mild to moderate skin laxity.

Ultherapy is also useful in restoring tone and lifting the brow area, eyelids, neck and jowls. Ideal candidates are those in their 30s and older with mild to moderate skin laxity.

While Ultherapy treats the deep foundational layer of the skin, the results, when compared with a facelift, are not as immediate or dramatic. However, it is a good alternative for those not ready for surgery or for patients looking to extend the effects of previous rejuvenation surgery. 

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