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I am considering facial rejuvenation and have been researching it on the Net. I have found that non-surgical procedures are temporary and require frequent repetitions. What about surgical options? How long do they last?

NAME WITHHELD
 ON REQUEST

A Your observations regarding non-surgical options are correct. But they have a good role to play in facial rejuvenation and can also compliment surgery in some cases. The effect of facial rejuvenation surgeries (face lift, brow lift, eyelid surgery, neck lift, etc) last for about 10 years provided you do not lose weight rapidly or expose yourself to the harsh sun for long periods. Also, the results are more powerful and worth the time and effort spent.

Q Recently, I read about scar-less breast augmentation using implants. Is it really possible to put in an implant without making any cuts? I have been reading about breast implants for quite a while on the Net, but this seems to be something new. Do you perform this procedure? I really hope this is not a marketing gimmick.

SUJATA PILLAI, CHENNAI

A There is no way that an implant can be placed without scars. However, scars can be placed in locations that are away from the breast and less visible, like the armpit or in the belly button. Only a saline implant can be placed through the belly button (trans-umbilical breast augmentation); therefore it is not a preferred method now.

The transaxillary method uses a small cut in the armpit to place the implant. In reality, these methods are not 'scar-less', and should be called minimal scar or hidden scar methods. For that matter, the traditional method, wherein a cut is made in the lower breast crease, also ensures that the scar is not visible unless the breast is pushed up. The only true scar-less method is fat grafting by injecting your own fat. Fat grafting of the breasts is yet to be employed on a large scale because many are

scared of interfering with breast imaging during cancer screenings.

Q Do you perform permanent lip implants? If yes, please advise the cost per lip. If lip implants are not possible, what is the alternative?

ROSHNI YADAV, ALLAHABAD

A Permanent lip implants are available, but one not very widely used. For lip plumping, the most popular options are temporary injectable fillers or a permanent filling with one's own tissue. The temporary fillers usually last for four to six months. Some permanent filler injections are available, but I do not recommend them.

For permanent plumping, I prefer to use a derma fat graft taken from the area behind the ears, where the scar can be well hidden. Fat grafting can also be done to plump the lips. Permanent lip plumping is a day-care surgery with fast recovery. The results are stable and predictable.

Q My wife gave birth to our third child at the age of 42 in April 2008. This time, her stomach has not yet regained its shape and neither have her breasts. What kind of treatment/surgery would you suggest? If surgery is involved, how long is the

recovery period?

JAGAT SINGH, PATIALA

A The problems that you have listed, breast reshaping and body contouring, can be surgically corrected through a 'mummy makeover'. The body contouring will involve liposuction to remove the extra fat, and a tummy tuck to remove the loose skin. These two procedures will ensure a well-shaped and flat tummy. Fat deposits in any other areas, usually the hips, thighs or arms, can be removed at the same time. Liposuction, when done by experienced surgeons at good centres, enjoys a good safety record. With the recent advances and refinements in techniques, a circumferential liposuction can safely be combined with a tummy tuck (lipoabdominoplasty). This would require a four-day stay in the hospital, along with a two week recovery time in Mumbai.

I would suggest that the breast surgery be performed at another stage. The sagging breasts would require a breast lift to regain the natural shape. In some cases, where there is a lot of loss in volume, a breast implant also is necessary to make the breasts fuller and firmer. A breast lift (mastopexy) is usually performed as a day-care surgery and would require you to be in Mumbai for about a week.