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Minimizing Scars After Facelift

Beverly Hills plastic surgeon **Renato Calabria, MD** explains to Jodi Thiessen a new technique that is ensuring scars following a facelift are unnoticeable.

One of the greatest deterrents for many people from seeking facial rejuvenation surgery is the

possibility of noticeable scars. While many scars fade over time to become imperceptible, they can become thick, raised and even red. If this happens on the face it is not only a definite giveaway that surgery has been performed but may cause psychological damage to the patient.

While hypertrophic or keloid scarring can be genetic, many times they can be avoided or eliminated altogether. If an incision can be closed with no tension it is less likely to widen and thicken into a noticeable scar. The more tension, the more pressure, and the bigger the scar is going to be.

The trick is to close the incision so there is no tension on the superficial layers of skin. The typical incisions used for most facelifting

techniques run down from the temple, in front of the ear, hidden behind the tragus, looped around to the back of the ear and sometimes out horizontally into the hair. Areas on and around the face susceptible to noticeable scarring are above the ear and behind the ear. Usually the incision that runs in front of the ear

becomes an almost invisible thin line that hides itself nicely in the folds of the ear.

To combat ugly scars, Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Dr. Renato Calabria has developed a technique that ensures there is no tension on the incision when it is closed. He has been successfully "diverting" the tension away from the incision using the patient's own skin. "The facelift technique remains the same but this new technique is for closure of the skin. Obviously you need to pull the skin or the facelift isn't going to work, so the tension has to go somewhere."

Traditionally once the facelift procedure has been completed and the underlying muscle and tissues have been tightened, the skin is pulled back and the excess skin is excised and removed. "Instead of doing that I deepithelialize the excess skin, which means taking off the superficial layer," says Dr. Calabria. "The deep layer called the dermis remains untouched. This develops essentially what I call two handles, one in front of the ear and one behind the ear. For the back of the ear incision I make a pocket on the opposite side of the incision, where the hair bearing incision is and bury this dermis in there. That diverts the tension of the skin. There is no tension on the incision line because the dermis is holding all the tension and is actually buried behind the incision line."

A similar procedure is performed for the incision in front of the ear. A pocket is made above the ear and the deepithelialized dermis is buried in there.

"The deeper tissue of the patient holds the tension and diverts it. This allows the superficial layers to just kiss each other and where they kiss each other there is no tension," explains Dr. Calabria. "It's like a double breasted suit, you put the deeper inside and the superficial on top."

People who have been shying away from facial rejuvenation for fear that scarring may be worse than their aged appearance, now have another option. With Dr. Calabria's technique, scars could certainly heal to become virtually imperceptible. **AA&CSM**



Before



After: Facial rejuvenation by Dr. Calabria



Before



After: Facial rejuvenation by Dr. Calabria



Wrinkle Eraser



Beverly Hills plastic surgeon **Renato Calabria, MD** explains a surgical technique that permanently removes the vertical frown lines from between the eyes. Jodi Thiessen reports.

Botox® has taken the world by storm with thousands lining up to inject their frown lines with this muscle-paralyzing toxin. While it works wonders at smoothing wrinkles and lines, its effectiveness only lasts for three to six months then needs repeating. This can be a costly venture because once those lines are smoothed you may never want to see them again!

That's why Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Dr. Renato Calabria uses a technique that permanently erases the frown lines between the eyes and it takes as little as fifteen minutes.

"All we do is make a tiny incision on the inner corner of each eyebrow and we excise the corrugator muscle which causes the furrow lines – the vertical lines in the middle of the brow," says Dr. Calabria. "It is done under local anesthesia and takes about 15 minutes. This is the most common area injected with Botox® because the frown lines can cause a tired or even angry appearance."

The beauty of this procedure is it can be done in degrees. "There are various stages, so you can do what the patient wants," explains Dr. Calabria. "You can excise a little bit so there is still movement in that area or you can excise the muscle completely and you won't get those vertical lines at all." This procedure only affects the corrugator muscle so the eyebrow can still be raised and all other facial expressions are maintained.

The corrugator muscle also tends to make the eyebrow droop so by disengaging this muscle not only will the lines on the skin be smoothed, but the brow will also be elevated.

While the possible risks are minor, seeking a skilled surgeon for this procedure is recommended. "There are sensory nerves going through the muscle so you don't want to cut them; if this happens you will get some numbness in the area," says Dr. Calabria.

For patients with very deep-set vertical lines, Dr. Calabria combines this procedure with a fat injection procedure. "Once the action of the muscle is gone eventually the

lines will disappear and while immediately after the procedure there is a vast improvement from before, the skin has a memory so the lines won't be completely smoothed straight away. I can combine with a little fat injection right into the lines. This fills in the crease so the result is immediate."

The recovery is minimal, at the most a few days. "It is very uncommon to see any problems associated with this procedure. Patients experience very minimal bruising, if any, and can return to work the next day," says Dr. Calabria. "Once the incision is healed you can't see it because it's hidden right at the edge of the eyebrow."

Very rarely the muscles can grow back and a little action in the area will return but it will remain vastly diminished than before the procedure. As an alternative to injecting endless amounts of Botox® into the face month after month this "surgical snip" may be the answer to smoothing frown lines permanently, saving you time and money. **AARCSM**