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Facelift Prices are Up By 13 Percent: What's Behind Rising Costs?

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While we might spend a small fortune on skin care, there's no investment more significant for an aging face than a facelift. As recent statistics show, the rising costs of facelifts can rival expenses ranging from a year's worth of college tuition to the price of a brand-new Bentley. These escalating fees raise several questions. What factors contribute to a facelift fee? Does opting for a "luxury lift" guarantee better results? Is the noticeable inflation in response to a higher-than-ever demand? How much should one invest in facial rejuvenation? Ultimately, does the cost of a facelift reflect the quality of the results it produces?

The Price of Youth

According to the most recent statistics from the Aesthetic Society, the cost of a facelift procedure increased by 13 percent in 2022. The facial experts we spoke to from around the country said patients can expect to pay anywhere from \$20,000 to \$200,000, depending on the surgeon, the geographical location and the type of facelift performed. While this price tag may seem high to some, it underscores the significance people place on rejuvenating their appearance.

Facelift Cost Factors

“Practices that put out excellent consistent results and have a reputation as a facelift destination will be higher,” says Palo Alto, CA facial plastic surgeon David Lieberman, MD, who performs every facelift surgery with his partner, plastic surgeon Sachin Pirahk, MD. “At the end of the day, the quality of the surgical technique, the level of experience of the surgeon and the aesthetic judgement during surgery are what matters most.”

Citing reputation as a top factor, Dr. Lieberman adds that if a surgeon’s name is on the tip of everyone’s tongue in your town, they’re probably capitalizing on that reputation. “Highly experienced and reputable plastic surgeons who have a track record of successful results often command higher fees,” he notes. “Their expertise and skill can contribute to the higher cost.”

New York facial plastic surgeon Konstantin Vasyukevich, MD, says, “As far as that type of facelift, people tend to overthink this factor. If a surgeon can achieve a great result for his or her patients, it doesn’t really matter what type of facelift they use, but rather the surgical technique. If results are there, this is the most important thing.”

Sophisticated Specialists

Delray Beach, FL facial plastic surgeon Miguel Mascaro, MD says patients should ensure they find a board-certified surgeon who has a similar ethos as they do in regard to what they are looking to achieve. “Think of it like going shopping for designers. If you like YSL, you don’t go to Gucci and show them a YSL bag. You just go to YSL,” he says.

Wayne, NJ facial plastic surgeon Jeffrey B. Wise, MD adds that facial plastic surgeons and plastic surgeons who focus specifically on facial procedures often come at a premium due to their refined skills and exclusive focus. “In addition, more sophisticated and nuanced techniques factor into cost. For example, a procedure like a deep-plane facelift may necessitate a greater degree of surgeon skill and experience.”

Time and Place

New York facial plastic surgeon Edward S. Kwak, MD says outside of the surgeon’s cost, the location is also a differentiator. “It just costs more to perform a procedure in New York City than in the Midwest. There are other team members involved in the care for a facelift besides the surgeon, these include the anesthesiologist, nurses, and surgical assistants whose wages are higher in metropolitan areas than in suburban areas. Wages have also increased significantly post COVID, so facelift prices have increased accordingly to address the increased costs.”

Palo Alto, CA facial plastic surgeon Jill Hessler, MD says we can look to the surge in plastic surgery during the pandemic as major a factor for rising costs. High demand equals higher prices. “People were working remotely, not able to travel so they had more time to recover. This increased the demand of facelifts and other plastic surgery procedures, so we saw an increase in pricing across the country,” she notes.

“After COVID, the cost of operating room and materials skyrocketed as gowns, masks, and medical supplies had supply chain issues during the pandemic,” adds Beverly Hills, CA facial plastic surgeon **Kimberly J. Lee, MD**. “This combined with the increased cost of living and inflation, led to greater anesthesia and staff fees.”

Prioritizing Results

For individuals contemplating a facelift, discerning the aspects to prioritize is paramount. Westborough, MA, facial plastic surgeon Min Ahn, MD underlines the significance of researching several surgeons to find the right fit. “Go to several providers in your area and see what the range of costs are. Within that group, choose the surgeon with whom you feel most comfortable. Your surgeon should have at least 10 years of experience.”

Added Expenses

Beyond the upfront cost, those considering a facelift should be prepared for post-operative expenses. “If you are traveling, expect to spend two weeks in that location,” says Dr. Mascaro. “Sometimes that can be expedited to one week, but plan for two. Also, you have to factor in meal prep, because you won’t want to exert yourself cooking.”

“Some higher-priced procedures may include more extensive post-operative care, such as follow-up appointments, consultations, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, LED light, and IV therapy,” says Dr. Lieberman. These are great options to add on to the procedure, he notes, but choosing the doctor in your price range with the best skill and track record is key. “A patient’s main priority should be to choose a surgeon they can trust.”

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