

Cosmetic Surgery in 2009

Dr. Walter KING

Specialist in Plastic Surgery, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Centre, Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital



Dr. Walter KING

There are many myths and fallacies about cosmetic surgery, e.g. cosmetic surgery is better and less expensive in some overseas countries. The fact is Chinese living in Hong Kong, China Mainland, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia and North America often consider Cosmetic Surgery in Hong Kong to be one of the highest qualities and best valued overall. The Adages "The Best Time is Now" and "The Best Place is Home" echo louder and louder with the passage of time.

In 2009, the trend is towards minimally invasive surgery. Great efforts have been made to introduce minimal incision and minimal scar surgery, which also translates into surgery with low risk and fast recovery.

So what is available to men and women who want to look better and younger in 2009? Here are 10 popular Cosmetic Surgeries in Hong Kong:

1. Double Eyelid Surgery

Having a natural eyelid fold which imparts a larger, brighter and prettier eye is usually considered a major blessing or born with gift. Today double eyelid surgery can give one a natural and durable eyelid fold that has no visible scar to show. For young persons and those under the age of 50, double eyelid surgery is done with one to two tiny 2mm incisions through which fine permanent sutures are placed to create a natural eyelid fold at the level of the tarsal plate. The surgery is done under local anaesthesia and usually takes 30 to 35 minutes. For people over 50, concurrent skin and fat excision are usually required in order to restore youthful look to the droopy eyelids. (Fig.1)

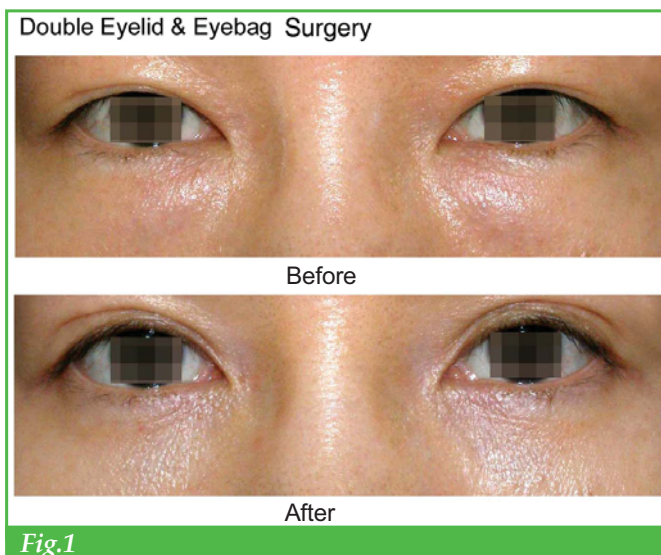


Fig.1

2. Eyebag Surgery

Baggy eyes often connote the beginning of ageing and frequently draw the comment of a tired look.

Eyebag surgery is a safe day surgery usually done under local anaesthesia with short recovery time of 4 - 5 days. Recovery time is shortest when surgery is carried out with carbon dioxide laser using the conjunctival route. Transconjunctival lower blepharoplasty done by carbon dioxide laser offers the advantages of less tissue oedema and bruising due to the coagulation effect of CO2 laser(Fig.1). There is no external scar to show unless the skin excision is also contemplated due to laxity. The majority of the men and women undergoing eyebag surgery under the age of 50 will not require any skin excision. Skin excision by the pinch method can be done at the same time when required. (Fig. 2)

Eyebag Surgery with Skin Excision



Before



After

Fig.2

3. Liposuction

If a person has already been exercising and dieting but still finds annoying excessive baggage around the waist, tummy, thighs, legs and arms, one can consider the most effective way of fat removal i.e. by liposuction.

Liposuction is the earliest form of minimally invasive surgery whereby 3mm - 5mm cannulae



attached to vacuum suction are inserted via small incisions to aspirate fat. Tumescence anaesthesia is used to minimise pain and bleeding.

Liposuction surgery can be done under local or general anaesthesia and recovery time is usually 2 - 3 days. Liposuction is most useful in reducing localised fat collections of the abdomen, flanks, lateral and inner thighs, arms and legs. Liposuction can be combined with mini- or full abdominoplasty such that abdominal skin and fat excision as well as fascia plication can be carried out for laxity of the abdominal wall. (Fig.3)

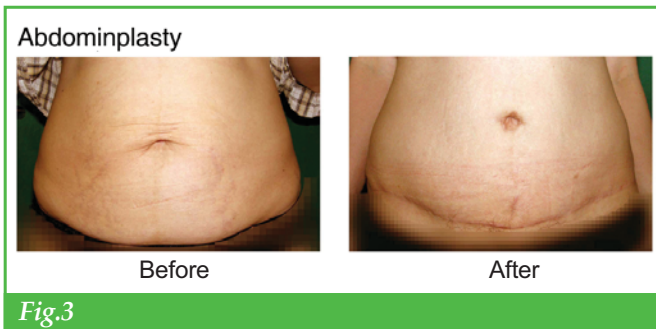


Fig.3

4. Breast Augmentation

Advances in the shape and quality of breast implants mean women can now safely improve the size and shape of their breasts by surgery and become proud of their body contour. Tear drop shaped cohesive silicone gel breast implants placed under video-assisted endoscopic approach represent the epitome of breast augmentation surgery and allows young women with underdeveloped breasts or postpartum women with atrophic breasts to regain confidence in their body image. Likewise patients requiring mastectomy for disease can have their breasts reconstructed by breast implants to regain symmetry and body shape.

Today, cohesive gel implants are more durable than saline implants because of the lower leakage rate (1-2% for gel implants versus 5-6% for saline implants) and cohesive gel implants are softer than saline implants. With proper assessment including measurements before surgery, women in 2009 are more likely to be successfully fitted with a natural-appearing implant that has a size and projection appropriate to her chest shape and body build. (Fig 4)



Fig.4

Nipple improvement surgeries include nipple reduction and correction of inverted nipples can be done by minimal scar approach. (Fig.5)



Fig.5

5. Nasal Augmentation

A straight and high nose can make a face stand out and look attractive. Asians with low bridge of nose can have a higher nose by placement of a silicone nasal prosthesis or cartilage graft. The chin can also be augmented by a silicone prosthesis. There are usually no external scars to show. A nostril rim or columella incision is used to prepare a subperiosteal pocket for the placement of a pre-fabricated L-shaped silicone prosthesis (Fig.6). When necessary, ear cartilage graft can be harvested for refinement of the nasal tips.



Fig.6

6. Fat Transplantation

Body fat is an excellent filler that can be strategically placed to make a nose higher, cheeks more prominent, chin sharper, forehead more wide and hands more full and smooth. Multiple sessions are usually required to make the injected fat long-lasting and effective. Fat is usually harvested from the abdomen or thighs, and centrifuged fat is injected by small blunt cannulae to improve their chance of survival. (Fig. 7)



Fig.7

7. Face Lift by Threads

Increasingly popular is the insertion of strategically placed anchor sutures or special threads with cogs by specially designed needles to create anti-gravity lifting of the facial skin and underlying tissues. Surgery is done under local anaesthesia via tiny skin openings and scars are minimal. The recovery time is shorter than the traditional facelift with incisions around the ear. This minimally invasive approach is best for brow lift, temporal lift and cheek lift. (Fig. 8)

**Fig.8**

8. Endoscopic Forehead Lift

For patients with drooping eyelids and eyebrows as well as prominent frown lines, the endoscopic forehead lift is the best minimally invasive procedure that can naturally restore the youthful appearance of the upper one third of the face. Using keyhole surgery carried out via 4 to 5 tiny incisions placed behind the hairline, the endoscopic forehead lift will naturally uplift the drooping brow and forehead. Skin excision is not necessary and surgery can be done as a day surgery under local anaesthesia. (Fig. 9)

**Fig.9**

9. Hair / Eyebrow Transplantation

While male and female pattern baldness can be helped by medications, hair transplantation by micrografts or single follicular units offer the best alternative solution. In one to three hair transplant sessions, the sparse hairline or the top of the head can have hair follicles dissected out under the microscope and transplanted from the back or the sides of the head to give the scalp hair a fuller look. A combination of strip graft harvested from the back, and single hair grafts from the sides of the head generate optimal number of hair grafts for transplantation to the scalp or the eyebrows. (Fig. 10)

**Fig.10**

10. Otoplasty

Persons with prominent ears no longer have to use hair style to hide their outstanding ears. Today prominent ears can be easily corrected with minimally invasive surgery using special sutures or threads that will securely keep prominent ears close to the sides of the head. Surgery is done under local anaesthesia and recovery time is about a week. (Fig.11)

**Fig.10**

Cosmetic surgery can have side-effects but with advances in surgical techniques, the side-effects are usually minor and low in incidence. Like all surgeries, cosmetic surgery also has side-effects like infection, oedema, haematoma formation and excessive scar formation. Revision surgery occasionally may also be required to achieve the best results.