



PATIENT INFORMATION

Lip Lift

Subnasal Upper Lip Lift

Your recovery & aftercare guide

CONSULTANT-LED CARE · WATERLOO, LIVERPOOL

WELCOME

Thank you for choosing The Pinewoods Clinic

This guide explains what to expect in the days and weeks after your lip lift, how to look after your wound at home, and when to contact us. Please read it before your operation and keep it somewhere handy during your recovery. Most people recover smoothly, and following this advice gives you the best chance of a comfortable recovery and a neat, well-healed scar.

Your care is consultant-led from your first consultation to your final review. If anything in this guide differs from the instructions your surgeon has given you personally, **follow your surgeon's advice.**

Your surgical team

Mr Rob Laycock

CONSULTANT MAXILLOFACIAL & FACIAL PLASTIC SURGEON • MEDICAL DIRECTOR

MBChB, BDS, PG Cert Ed, FHEA, MFDS, MRCS, FRCSEd • GMC 6145445 • GDC 76318

Mr Laycock has over 20 years' surgical experience and leads The Pinewoods Clinic. A University of Manchester graduate, he completed specialist training in cosmetic and reconstructive facial surgery in the UK and abroad, with fellowship expertise in facial rejuvenation, eyelid surgery and skin cancer reconstruction, and further training in rhinoplasty and orthognathic surgery in the USA and the Netherlands.

He holds NHS consultant posts at Aintree University Hospital and the Countess of Chester Hospital, is an examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and is Training Programme Director for the North West.

Mr David Houghton

CONSULTANT ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON

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Mr Houghton is dual qualified in dentistry (Leeds) and medicine (York). He ranked first in the UK national recruitment for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and trained at the Liverpool Head and Neck Centre (Aintree University Hospital) and Alder Hey Children's Hospital, developing interests in skin cancer, post-traumatic facial deformity and facial plastic surgery.

He has completed further training in rhinoplasty, orthognathic and facial plastic surgery in the UK and Europe, and was awarded his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (OMFS) in 2021.

How to reach us

Telephone **0151 380 0055** • Email treatment@pinewoodsclinic.com

All voicemails and website contact forms are monitored. See Section 08 for urgent warning signs.

SECTION 01

About your operation

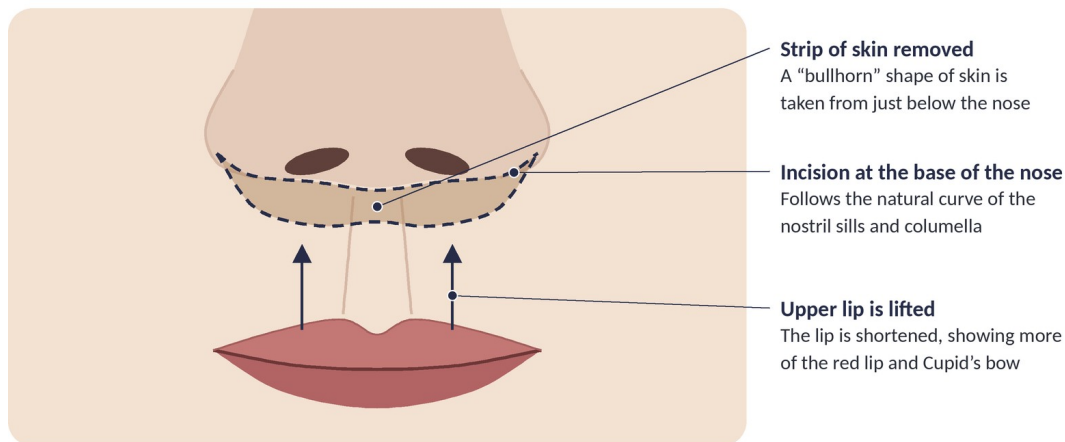
A lip lift shortens the distance between the base of the nose and the upper lip. This lifts the lip, shows more of the red part of the lip (the vermillion) and can restore definition to the Cupid's bow, which often flattens and lengthens with age. It is usually carried out as a day case under local anaesthetic, with or without sedation.

In a subnasal ("bullhorn") lip lift, a carefully measured strip of skin is removed from just beneath the nose and the lip is lifted and stitched in layers, so that the scar sits in the natural crease where the nose meets the lip.

Your surgeon will confirm the approach and amount of lift planned for you.

1 THE INCISION

Before surgery: what is marked and removed



2 YOUR SCAR

After healing: where the scar sits

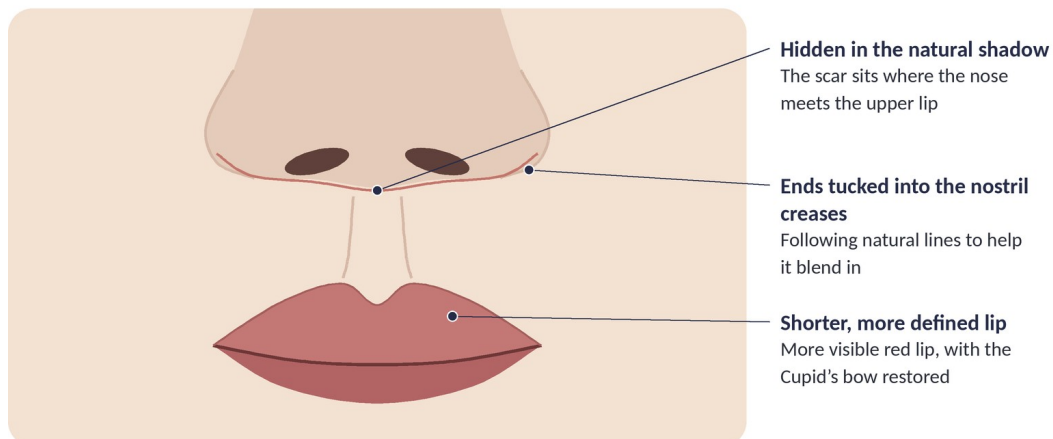


Illustration for guidance only. The shape and size of skin removed is tailored to each patient.

SECTION 02

Risks and possible complications

All surgery carries some risk. A lip lift is a well-established procedure and most patients recover without problems. Your surgeon will discuss the risks that apply to you before you give consent.

COMMON

Expected in many patients and usually temporary

- ◆ **Swelling and bruising** — the lip can look very full or “over-lifted” at first; this settles over several weeks.
- ◆ **Tightness and a stiff smile** — the lip may feel tight and move less naturally for 4 to 8 weeks.
- ◆ **Numbness** — of the upper lip, and sometimes the front teeth or gums; usually recovers over weeks to months.
- ◆ **Red or pink scar** — normal for several months before it fades.

LESS COMMON

Can occur and may need further treatment

- ◆ **Infection** — may need antibiotics.
- ◆ **Bleeding or a collection of blood (haematoma)** — occasionally needs draining.
- ◆ **Wound separation or slow healing** — more likely in smokers.
- ◆ **A visible, widened or thickened scar** — the scar usually hides well, but can occasionally be more noticeable; massage, silicone and time help.
- ◆ **Asymmetry** — small differences between sides are normal; faces are rarely perfectly symmetrical.
- ◆ **Under- or over-correction** — the lip may be lifted less or more than planned, or show more of the upper teeth.
- ◆ **Changes to the nostril shape** — the nostril base can appear slightly wider or flatter.
- ◆ **Some loss of lift over time** — a little of the lift can relax as the tissues settle.

RARE

Uncommon but serious — see Section 08 for warning signs

- ◆ **Long-lasting numbness or altered sensation** — of the lip.
- ◆ **Reactions to anaesthetic, medicines or dressings** — including allergy.

REVISION SURGERY

A small number of patients need a further procedure to fine-tune their result — for example to adjust the amount of lift, improve symmetry or revise the scar. Because swelling and scar maturation take several months, any revision is usually considered only after 3 to 6 months.

Revision surgery may involve additional costs, such as theatre, anaesthetic and surgical fees. Your surgeon will explain this at your consultation and the details are set out in your treatment terms. Please ask if anything is unclear before your operation.

SECTION 03

Your recovery at a glance

Everyone heals at a slightly different pace, but most people follow a pattern like this. Swelling is usually at its worst on days 2 to 3 and improves steadily after that.

WHEN	WHAT TO EXPECT	WHAT TO DO
Day of surgery	The lip feels tight and numb as the anaesthetic wears off. A little oozing from the wound is normal.	Go home and rest with your head raised. Use cool compresses (see Section 05). Take regular pain relief and stick to soft foods.
Days 1 – 3	Swelling peaks. The lip may look very full, stiff or over-lifted — this is expected.	Start wound care the morning after surgery, twice daily. You can shower from 24 hours.
Days 5 – 7	Swelling and bruising begin to settle.	Stitch removal or review if booked — your team will confirm the date. Keep sleeping on your back, head raised, until day 7.
Days 8 – 14	Most visible bruising has gone. Many people feel comfortable returning to work.	Continue wound care until day 10. Strenuous exercise from day 7; bending and lifting from day 14.
Weeks 2 – 6	The scar is pink and may feel firm. The lip still feels tight when smiling.	Start scar massage 2 weeks after stitches are removed or dissolved. Protect the scar with SPF 30+. Contact sports from 1 month.
3 months	Lip movement feels much more natural. The shape is close to final.	Continue massage and sun protection for at least 3 months.
6 – 12 months	The scar matures and becomes pale and discreet. Final result.	Enjoy your result — we are always happy to see you for a review.

SECTION 04

What is normal after surgery

These effects are an expected part of healing. They can look dramatic in the first few days, but they settle with time.

Swelling

The upper lip is often very swollen and may look over-lifted or “ducky” at first. Most swelling settles over 2 to 3 weeks, with subtle swelling continuing for a few months.

Bruising

Bruising around the lip and nose is common and fades over 7 to 14 days. It may spread downwards towards the chin.

Tightness & stiff smile

The lip may feel tight and your smile may look different or less natural. This improves steadily over 4 to 8 weeks.

Numbness

The upper lip, and sometimes your front teeth or gums, may feel numb or tingly. Sensation usually returns gradually over weeks to months.

Discomfort

Mild to moderate discomfort is expected. Paracetamol or ibuprofen can help. Avoid painkillers containing aspirin, which can increase bleeding.

Minor oozing & crusting

A little oozing and crusting along the wound in the first few days is normal. See Section 08 if bleeding is more than a little ooze.

Setting realistic expectations

Your lip will look its most lifted in the first few weeks while it is swollen and tight. As the tissues relax it softens into a more natural shape, and a little of the early lift is expected to settle. Judge your result at around 3 months, and your scar at 6 to 12 months.

SECTION 05

Caring for your wound

Cool compresses — first 48 hours

Gentle cooling reduces swelling and bruising. Apply a cool compress, such as a clean gauze pad soaked in cooled boiled water, or a wrapped cold pack, over the upper lip for 10 to 15 minutes at a time, several times a day. Never put ice directly on the skin, and don't press on the wound.

Daily wound care

Start the morning after your surgery and repeat **twice a day for 10 days**.

- 1 Wash your hands thoroughly.
- 2 Gently clean along the wound using **lukewarm cooled boiled water** and a cotton bud or cotton pad, removing any crusts without scrubbing.
- 3 Pat dry with a clean pad. **Never rub the wound.**
- 4 Apply a thin layer of **Vaseline Pure Petroleum Jelly** along the wound.
- 5 Always clean the area before each new application of Vaseline.

Eating & drinking

Stick to soft foods for the first few days and take small mouthfuls with a small spoon. Avoid very hot, spicy or crunchy foods, and avoid straws.

Mouth care

Brush gently with a soft toothbrush and avoid pulling your lip up to check your teeth. Rinse your mouth with water after meals.

Protecting the lip

Keep facial movements gentle: avoid wide yawning, exaggerated smiling, puckering and pulling on the lip. Try not to blow your nose, and sneeze with your mouth open.

Sleeping & showering

Sleep on your back with your head raised for 7 days. You can shower after 24 hours; keep water pressure off your face.

SECTION 06

Getting back to normal

Raising your blood pressure or knocking your face in the first two weeks can cause bleeding and more swelling, and stretching the lip can put strain on the stitches. Use this guide to pace your return to everyday activities.

ACTIVITY	WHEN YOU CAN RESTART
Showering & hair washing	After 24 hours — keep the water pressure off your face
Walking & light activity	Straight away — gentle walks help circulation
Alcohol	Avoid for at least 48 hours, as it can increase swelling and bleeding
Driving	Only when you are comfortable and can react quickly in an emergency. Not within 24 hours of sedation or 48 hours of a general anaesthetic.
Returning to work	Most people return to desk-based work after 7 to 10 days. Physical jobs may need 2 weeks
Strenuous exercise (gym, running)	After 7 days
Bending, heavy lifting, straining	Avoid for 14 days, and avoid any knock or trauma to the face
Kissing, puckering, whistling, straws	After 2 weeks
Blowing your nose	Avoid for 2 weeks
Routine dental treatment	Postpone for 4 weeks if possible. Tell your dentist you have had a lip lift
Lipstick and lip products	On the lips once the wound has healed and stitches are out — usually around 2 weeks. Keep products off the scar until fully healed
Make-up over the scar	Once the wound has fully healed — use new products
Lip fillers or anti-wrinkle injections	Wait at least 3 months, and discuss with your surgeon first
Swimming, hot tubs, saunas, steam rooms	Once stitches have been removed or dissolved
Contact sports	After 1 month
Smoking & vaping	Avoid throughout your recovery — nicotine slows healing and increases the risk of complications and a poorer scar

SECTION 07

Looking after your scar

Your scar is placed in the natural shadow beneath the nose so that, once mature, it is usually very discreet. How you care for it over the first few months makes a real difference to the final result.

Sun protection

Once your wound has healed, protect the scar with SPF 30 or above for at least 3 months, and ideally for a year. UV light can make a healing scar darker and more noticeable.

Scar massage

Start **2 weeks after all stitches have been removed or dissolved.**

- ◆ Massage along the scar firmly but comfortably **twice a day for 5 minutes** each time, using small circular movements.
- ◆ Continue for at least 3 months. This helps soften and flatten the scar and eases tightness in the lip.
- ◆ Use a silicone scar gel, for example **Kelo-Cote**, to help the massage and improve the scar's appearance.
- ◆ Avoid pulling downwards on the upper lip while massaging.

The more you massage, the better the result.

LITTLE AND OFTEN, EVERY DAY, FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS

SECTION 08

When to get help

Serious problems after a lip lift are uncommon, but it is important to recognise them early.

URGENT — GO TO YOUR NEAREST A&E NOW

Then let us know. Call 999 if you cannot get there safely.

- ◆ Heavy bleeding that does not stop despite 30 minutes of firm pressure
- ◆ Rapid, tense swelling of the lip or face, especially on one side
- ◆ Any difficulty breathing or swallowing
- ◆ Swelling of the tongue or throat, a widespread rash or feeling faint — signs of a severe allergic reaction

CONTACT THE CLINIC PROMPTLY IF YOU NOTICE

- ◆ Redness, heat or swelling that is spreading or getting worse after day 3
- ◆ Yellow or green discharge, or an unpleasant smell from the wound
- ◆ A temperature of 38°C or above, or feeling generally unwell
- ◆ A wound that opens up, or a stitch that comes loose early
- ◆ Pain that is not controlled by paracetamol or ibuprofen

If your wound bleeds

Dampen a clean gauze swab with cooled boiled water and apply firm, steady pressure over the wound for at least 30 minutes, or until the bleeding stops. Sit upright and stay calm. If bleeding continues despite this, contact us, or go to A&E if we cannot be reached.

Questions or concerns

Call the clinic on **0151 380 0055**. If the line is busy, please leave a message — all voicemails and website contact forms are monitored and the team will call you back. You can also email **treatment@pinewoodsclinic.com** or use the Emergency Contact page at pinewoodsclinic.com. Outside clinic hours, call NHS 111 for urgent advice.

SECTION 09

My recovery notes

Your nurse or surgeon will complete these details with you.

Procedure

Date of surgery

Surgeon

Stitches (dissolvable / removal date)

Review appointment

Medication to take home

Questions for my review

THE PINEWOODS CLINIC

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This leaflet provides general information and does not replace the individual advice of your surgeon. Document: PIL-LIPLIFT-AC • Version 1.0 • Issued September 2026 • Review due September 2028.



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