

THE ATTRACTIONS & BEAUTY OF THE LIPS

THE LIP IS CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE MOST VISIBLE HUMAN ORGAN AND HUMAN emotions can be clearly deduced from their appearance. Anatomically it consists of skin, muscles and mucosa and forms a major part of facial expressions. It is soft, protruding and pliable and has multi-functions. The upper and lower lips are essential for food intake and speech. The rich endowment of sensory nerves allows the lips to detect touch, warmth and cold and is also an erogenous zone. In essence the lips are an important component of facial symmetry and expressions of facial aesthetics. Therefore any reduction of lip volume like ageing, scarring or asymmetry would affect the person badly. In order to improve self confidence and sexual security it is important to correct or restore any abnormality which has affected the lips.

Problems of lips and possible corrections:-

- **THIN LIPS** – this can be either from birth or acquired during trauma or when one ages. Very thin lips are not aesthetic or sexually appealing. Therefore many patients would want it plumped up with non permanent fillers. Great satisfaction can be achieved by using these fillers. The use of semi-permanent or permanent fillers is often discouraged as any unwanted results would be hard to correct. In the past surgeries to advance the mucosa from behind the lips were commonly performed but may leave patients with some degree of post-operative scarring inside the mouth. It may also cause some asymmetry of the lips.
- **THICK LIPS** – the excessively thick and large lips can be repulsive. Therefore it would be worthwhile having them reduced surgically. The excess mucosa, soft tissues and muscles can be removed to reduce the size. It is an art as well as accurate and meticulous surgical skills to achieve good symmetrical lips.
- **DROOPY CORNER OF THE LIPS** – as one ages and the skin tone and the muscles around the mouth weaken. The corners of the mouth then sag down and appear depressed. It will make one appear old, tired and detached. Facial ageing with the descent of the whole facial skin will further depress the droopy mouth. The solution to this is a good facelift which will pull up the sagging fat, muscles and skin and hence restores the corner of the mouth. A well administered botox below the corner of the mouth will improve the appearance temporarily.
- **WRINKLES AROUND THE LIPS** – as one age vertical wrinkles will often develop around the lip. It is also a common feature in those constantly exposed to the sun. They can lead to premature ageing due to the solar damage. They start faintly but will deepen and become worse and obvious. This can be treated with resurfacing lasers often yielding satisfactory results. Chemical peeling can be done but may not as good as the lasers. Some would attempt injecting fillers but these lines are extremely delicate and it is often difficult to achieve encouraging result.

Sometimes the excess injected filler may cause unsightly ridges.

- **CONGENITAL CLEFT LIP** – this is a very sad deformity for the parents when the baby is born and will affect the parents first before the baby. There will be an initial shock with many possible repercussions. Some would reject the poor child while others will over protect the child. Whatever the situation the cleft lip will have to be restored as accurately as possible so that the affected child can be restored back to the society as healthy normal children. The reconstructive surgery must be well tailored, accurate and aesthetic.
- **NEUROLOGICAL DEFORMITY OF THE LIPS** – often seen in Bell's palsy or stroke. For the paralysis due to Bell's palsy the one sided droopy face and lip can be suspended or reconstructed to restore an acceptable static balance. However for static and dynamic balance complex microsurgical reconstructions can help the patient to some extent.
- **TRAUMATIC INJURY AND DEFORMITIES** – in the present world of high speed travel, risky sports and war inflections the injuries to the lips can be very common and severe. Therefore timely appropriate corrections and restorations will minimise residual deformities.

The state of the lips is important and yet not easy to maintain to keep them looking good and youthful. With appropriate care and treatment the desired appearance and shape can be improved. It is important to avoid unnecessary exposure to the damaging effects of the sun. Very harsh conditions, low humidity or extreme cold can also hasten the damaging effects. On the other hand ladies are experts in enhancing the lip appearances by the staggering range of lipstick colours. With symmetrical lips this can add wonders to the bearers. ■

