



# Contour Thread Lifts

by Dr Peter Prendergast BMEDSC MB BCH BAO MRCSI

The cosmetic beauty industry is one that is continually evolving with new methods to meet the demands of its ever-growing market. Many people are now seeking quick cosmetic procedures that can provide natural-looking enhancement without a major surgical commitment. It is in response to the desire for a subtle nip/tuck that a whole new crop of non-surgical and minimally invasive procedures has gained favour among the general population. One such treatment is the new Serdev Thread Lift, which is quickly becoming popular in Ireland.

## What is a Serdev Thread Lift?

A Serdev Thread Lift, pioneered by world-renowned Bulgarian surgeon Nikolay Serdev, is a minimally invasive facelift using specially designed threads to gently lift tissues and improve the contours of the face. As we age, our faces lose volume and our skin and muscle lose elasticity, causing what is known as "ptosis" or, more commonly, sagging. Normal ageing creates lines and wrinkles around the eyes and mouth, as well as limp jowls and tired-looking eyes. The result is a drooping, sad-looking face, which Serdev likens to a "Mask of Tragedy" in a shrewd reference to the classic symbol of Greek theatre. The Serdev Suture Lift aims to transform the "Mask of Tragedy" into a "Mask of Comedy", restoring a look of happy youthfulness to the face.

The hallmark of the Serdev Thread Lift is to lift moveable structures and anchor them to stable structures in the face, neck or scalp. The moveable SMAS or superficial musculoaponeurotic system - a thin sheet of tissue that envelops the muscles of the face and neck - is lifted using specially designed elastic threads and secured to stable structures such as periosteum that covers bone. The procedure is so minimally invasive that no stitches are required after the procedure and no scars are seen.

## How is the Serdev Thread Lift performed?

The main treatment areas include temporal (temples and eyes), mid-face (cheeks and jowls), brow and neck. Under local anaesthesia, a surgeon makes several tiny perforations in the skin either behind the hairline or in a discreet area above the ear. Using a specially designed needle, the thread is passed under the skin and at varying depths in a predetermined geometric course so that the pulling effect on the SMAS provides instant beautification by lifting, defining features, improving proportions, and enhancing the shape of the face. Once lifted, the thread is tied to secure it in place underneath the skin where it is invisible. The threads used are antibacterial to lower the risk of infection and are partially elastic which allows normal movement without compromising the lifting effect.

## Who is a candidate for the Serdev Thread Lift?

The Serdev Thread Lift is ideal for those who want to look younger and better without looking like they have had cosmetic surgery, leaving people guessing about the origin of your new, rejuvenated look. There is no specific age group that is or is not suitable for this procedure, as people age physically at different rates. The ideal candidates for this lift would be those who have mild to moderate facial sagging and who are looking for subtle, natural-looking results. Those with significant ageing and sagging skin might not achieve the best result from the Serdev Thread Lift. Likewise, the procedure is not intended to remove excess skin or fat, though fat reduction under the chin is sometimes combined with the lift in certain individuals. Importantly, a candidate for the Serdev Thread Lift must have realistic expectations. The results are not miraculous; patients should not expect to get the same result as a full surgical facelift. Results will vary depending on skin quality, lifestyle, and physical age, and this is true for all cosmetic procedures.



## How does the Serdev Thread Lift differ from other face lifting methods?

The traditional SMAS facelift involves lifting the sagging facial tissues and removing the excess skin. With an SMAS facelift, all three layers of the face – skin, fat and SMAS – are lifted and repositioned for a more youthful look. Lifting the face this way creates a more natural look than was previously found when lifting only the skin. A popular variation of this lift is the S-Lift or Mini Lift, where incisions are made following the curve in front of the ear and up into the hairline in an "S" shape. This procedure carries less risk than the full SMAS Facelift and the recovery time is relatively quick in comparison.

Face lift techniques continue to evolve as patients' needs and expectations change over time. The more recent trend of minimally invasive thread lifting is not an alternative to the traditional face lift, but is meant as an option for those who do not want to undergo a full face lift for various reasons. One might choose a thread lift due to a preference for local over general anaesthesia, the convenience of a shorter recovery or the desire for a more natural-looking and subtle result. Two popular thread lifts include the Aptos Lift and the Contour Thread Lift. In these, barbed threads are inserted into the fat of the face or neck and retracted, which causes the barbs to grab fat and lift

it upwards. Threads are then secured and left in place in the face to create a lifting effect. The difference between the Aptos and Contour Thread Lifts is in the threads themselves. The former has polypropylene threads with barbs that are unidirectional, and the latter uses clear polypropylene threads with barbs that open out like an umbrella. These threads do not dissolve and remain in place unless removed surgically. Since the threads have tiny barbs, like fish-hooks, removing them can prove more difficult than with non-barbed threads such as those used in the Serdev lift.

The Serdev thread lift is performed, like other thread lifts, under local anaesthesia. It is a scarless procedure, leaving only tiny puncture marks that fade to become practically invisible. Serdev's threads are not barbed; rather they are long term absorbable, semi-elastic braided threads. Removal of these threads is simple should it be required, and the procedure can be repeated if desired. Because of their elasticity, they prove to be less traumatic to the fixed moveable tissues. Besides the threads, the most important difference of the Serdev Thread Lift lies in the principle of fixing the moveable tissues of the face to more secure structures. This creates a more secure, longer lasting lift than simply lifting fat by gripping them with barbed threads.

## What are the benefits of the Serdev Thread Lift?

The Serdev Thread Lift raises sagging brows to create a pleasing arch of the eyebrows, opening and brightening the eyes. Lifting the mid-face reduces jowls and defines the jawline. This subtle lift enhances the overall shape of the face, recreating the youthful heart-shape whilst also tightening skin and softening mouth and cheek lines. The neck lift and temporal lift compliment these procedures providing an overall effect that can literally take several years off in 1-2 hours. The Serdev Thread Lift is performed on an outpatient basis, with a quick recovery period. Normal activities can be resumed almost immediately. As with all cosmetic procedures, longevity of results is not predictable, and depends on a number of variables, including age, smoking history, general health and nutrition. Given the special technique and threads used in the Serdev Thread Lift, results achieved with this method are reported to be superior to other thread lifts. Serdev Thread Lifts are often combined with other treatments to improve skin quality, soften and smooth lines and wrinkles, and to augment and define features such as cheekbones. Procedures such as botulinum toxin and fillers provide synergy and enhance the rejuvenating effects of thread lifts even further.

## What are the risks/side effects?

Swelling and bruising can occur, but they are usually minimal. Most patients do not bruise at all following the Serdev Thread Lift. Some temporary bunching of skin may occur near the hairline after a mid-face lift but this settles in 2-3 weeks.

## What does the treatment cost and where is it available?

Venus Medical Beauty in Dublin is currently the only clinic in Ireland offering the Serdev method of thread lifting. The cost of treatment is from €2000-€6000 depending on the number and extent of areas treated.

## Summary

The Serdev Thread Lift is a great option for those who want to look better but who do not yet need a full face lift, or simply those who do not wish to undergo a major cosmetic procedure. This minimally invasive method of face lifting can provide great results for the right candidate, and is definitely worth considering for those looking for a quick way to enhance their own natural beauty.



### Dr Peter Prendergast BMEDSC MB BCH BAO MRCSI

Dr Prendergast, Venus Medical Beauty's medical director is a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, British Association of Cosmetic Doctors, American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine, American Society of Laser Medicine and Surgery and numerous other international societies. He has been invited to speak on various topics relating to cosmetic medicine in Ireland and abroad. He works in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Belfast, Singapore and Italy.

For further information log onto [www.venusmedicalbeauty.ie](http://www.venusmedicalbeauty.ie)

For more information on the Serdev Thread Lift, contact Venus Medical Beauty, Heritage House, Dundrum Office Park, Dublin 14, Tel: 353-1-2962747, Fax: 353-1-2962748, [www.venusmedicalbeauty.ie](http://www.venusmedicalbeauty.ie).