

LIFTING · HIFU

HIFU: What to Know

Focused ultrasound for laxity of the face and neck: what it does, who it suits, how to prepare and what to expect afterwards.

HIFU stands for high-intensity focused ultrasound. A transducer converges ultrasound energy at a set depth so that a small point of tissue is heated while the surface is spared, prompting collagen to remodel where the skin and the SMAS layer beneath it have loosened. Dr Sin Yong performs it on the Ultraformer MPT platform, and assesses each face first to decide whether focused ultrasound is the right tool at all. This guide covers suitability, preparation, the treatment day, the first days and the signs that need a call.

What it is

HIFU heats small points at set depths beneath the skin without breaking the surface. On the Ultraformer MPT the 4.5 mm cartridge reaches the SMAS, the fascial layer addressed in a surgical facelift; the 3.0 mm and 1.5 mm cartridges work in the dermis. Each heated point triggers a wound-healing response, and collagen remodels around it gradually rather than on the day.

It is directed at laxity. It does not reduce a full fat pad, replace lost volume or remove redundant skin, and it does not reposition tissue the way a thread lift or a facelift does. HIFU is an umbrella term: devices differ in transducer design, imaging and clearance, so one platform's shot counts do not translate to another.

- Addresses loosening of the skin and SMAS along the jawline, under the chin and across the neck.
- Does not treat a hollow, a full submental fat pad, redness or pigment.
- VF Lift – Vertical Facelift is a different protocol: it runs on Volnewmer monopolar radiofrequency and does not use focused ultrasound.

Who it suits and who should wait

HIFU tends to suit early to moderate laxity in a face where the underlying fat is neither markedly excessive nor depleted, with enough tissue depth above bone for the planned cartridge. It is a poorer fit where the problem is mainly volume loss, a full fat pad, or a heavy lower face with a great deal of redundant skin; there a different mechanism or a plastic surgery opinion is the more honest answer.

- Wait if you are pregnant, or if there is active infection, open lesions or inflamed skin in the treatment area.

- Recent filler or threads in the plane to be treated are assessed first; treatment may be adjusted or deferred.
- Implants or metal near the field and a history of keloid scarring are assessed individually.

Before your appointment

Dr Sin Yong examines the face at rest and in animation, palpates skin and fat thickness over each zone, and maps where the SMAS is lax against where volume is missing. That map decides which cartridge goes where, and whether HIFU is advised at all.

- Declare any filler, threads or implants in the face or neck, and roughly when they were done.
- Tell the clinic if you are pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Avoid strong sun exposure and tanning on the face and neck beforehand.
- Pause retinoids and exfoliating acids if advised before your visit.
- Bring photographs of your face from earlier years and a list of previous energy-device treatments.

On the day

The skin is cleansed, the zones are marked and ultrasound gel is applied so the transducer couples cleanly with the skin. Energy is delivered in lines, cartridge by cartridge: the 4.5 mm cartridge only where there is enough depth above bone, the shallower cartridges over thinner areas. The thyroid, the orbital rim and the course of the marginal mandibular nerve are avoided.

Most people feel a deep warmth or a brief ache, particularly over the jawline and other bony areas. Energy and sequence are adjusted to what you report rather than run from a preset, so say what you feel. Afterwards the gel is removed; the skin may look slightly pink and you can usually return to ordinary activity.

- Arrive with clean skin; make-up is removed anyway.
- Say during treatment if a spot is sharply painful rather than achy.

The first days

Mild redness, warmth and tenderness along the treated lines are expected and settle on their own. Slight swelling along the jawline, a small bruise or a patch of altered sensation can occur and is reviewed if it does not settle. There are no incisions or dressings.

Any early feeling of firmness is not the remodelling itself. Collagen forms gradually around each heated point over the following weeks and months, which is why review is timed to allow for that response. How much change follows varies with age, skin quality, the degree of laxity at the outset, sun exposure and weight change, and no particular outcome is promised in advance.

- Protect the treated skin from the sun.
- Be gentle with the area while it is tender.
- Keep your review appointment even if everything feels settled.

Questions to ask

A shot count or a brochure label answers a question you did not ask. These are more useful.

- Which device is it, and which cartridge depths will be used over which zones?
- Will tissue thickness be palpated before the depth is chosen?
- Who sets the energy and adjusts it as I describe what I feel?
- Is laxity really my main problem, or is it volume loss or fat?

When to contact the clinic

- Numbness or altered sensation that persists rather than settling.
- Any change in how your mouth, brow or another part of your face moves.
- Marked or one-sided swelling.
- A raised welt that does not flatten, or a blister or burn on the skin.
- Pain that is increasing rather than easing.

WhatsApp +65 8023 7170. For a suspected vascular problem after filler, or any sudden change in vision, seek emergency care immediately and tell them what was injected.

This guide is general information and not a substitute for an assessment. Read the full page: drsinyong.com/hifu-singapore/. Medically reviewed by Dr Sin Yong, 7 October 2026.

REFERENCES

1. Systematic review and meta-analysis of safety and efficacy of high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) for face and neck rejuvenation. Lasers in Medical Science (PubMed). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32026164/>
2. A Systematic Review of High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound in Skin Tightening and Body Contouring. Aesthetic Surgery Journal (PubMed). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40184185/>