



The Perfect Jaw

Minimally invasive options to achieve that perfect V-shaped face

by Dr Eileen Lew

“BEAUTY LIES IN the eyes of the beholder.”

As true as this saying holds, one’s definition of beauty changes and redefines itself through the times as society progresses and evolves. In recent years, as a “tidal wave” of Korean pop and drama series sweep through our land, the image of a “V-shaped” face with a gentle sloping jawline has been increasingly defined as the epitome of Asian beauty, especially for women. How then does changing the jawline affect one’s look so significantly? If one seeks to achieve this, what non-invasive options are there? Here we seek to answer some commonly asked questions.

The Quest for the Graceful Jawline

The jawline and chin contribute significantly to the balance of the whole face, with subtle changes being able to exponentially change the balance and harmony of one’s facial features, sometimes more than a change to the nose, eyes and lips. While a prominent, angulated jawline may look distinguished on a male with broad shoulders and of a large built, it can give the female an overly masculine appearance.

A broad or squarish jawline can be due to several reasons. These include prominent mandibular (jaw) bones; over-sized jaw muscles, also known as the masseters, at the sides of the jaw; frequent habitual grinding of teeth, chewing gum or crunching ice, which can lead to the hypertrophy (enlargement) of the masseters; and a receding or dimpled chin that can contribute to an apparent shortened face length.

With the advances in technology, seeking the ideal jawline has become relatively easier and more affordable. Currently, many options exist,

from simple dieting to the invasive surgery. For those not keen to seek any treatment, an illusion of a slimmer face can be obtained by adjusting one's hairstyle or makeup. Dieting is also a possible alternative, but if done over aggressively, its effects may be over-amplified, as the excessive loss of facial fat pads may result in the person looking tired and haggard. Although these options are feasible, the journey is usually long and arduous with mixed results.

At the other extreme, some head to Korea, the touted 'promised land of plastic surgery', for invasive procedures like jaw shaving. While invasive surgery might have previously been the only option to change the jawline profile, recent advancements in non-invasive technology have made this less favourable with patients due to the need to travel, associated long downtime and increased amount of surgical risk.

Non-Surgical Jaw Contouring

For those seeking the minimally invasive or non-invasive procedure with minimal downtime and faster results, the advances in medical non-invasive technology has made this possible. The increased effectiveness, safety profile and social acceptance of products, such as *botulinum toxin* and fillers, to contour one's face with minimal downtime and side effects, have led many to embrace its use over the above more invasive options.

Several methods exist to contour the jawline. As every patient's face is unique, a combination of methods should be implemented to achieve harmonisation with the facial features. Prior to a treatment plan, a careful assessment of each patient's facial profile is prudent; it is also important to distinguish between a broad jawline caused by the bone structure itself or that of oversized jaw muscles (masseters).

Another treatment that is very well-received is the use of non-invasive

technology such as infra-red energy, to further complement jawline contouring. The latest version of the Sciton Skin Tightening and Rejuvenation (STAR) treatment, STAR2, uses an infrared device (Skintyte2) and Broadband Light (BBL) to boost collagen production and combat skin imperfections. Skintyte2 deeply heats the dermis of the skin and stimulates collagen, providing a lifting effect along the jawline and contouring it further; BBL then rejuvenates and enhances complexion.

Botulinum Toxin Injections to Define Jawlines

If the predominant reason is due to excessive jaw muscle bulk, an increasingly well-received minimally invasive treatment to slim the face are (multiple) *botulinum toxin* injections to relax the enlarged masseters, thus slimming the face. *Botulinum toxin* is a naturally purified protein that relaxes facial muscles temporarily. After identifying the major bulk of jaw muscles on each side of the jawline, little injections of *botulinum toxin* are usually given on each side.

This procedure is quick, straightforward and relatively painless. The added benefit is that patients are able to resume their daily activities almost immediately. Patients are usually reviewed at two weeks after their first injection to determine if there is a need for top up or further contouring. Thereafter, a follow-up after three months is usually arranged. The duration of the effects of *botulinum toxin* will depend on the strength of the muscle and doses injected.

However, care must be taken to manage the expectations of patients. They should be advised that *botulinum toxin* targets and relaxes muscles, but have no effect on the bone structure itself. Thus, *botulinum toxin* injections may have minimal effects if the predominant cause of a broad jawline profile is the structure of the jawbones themselves. A clinical assessment will help to differentiate the two.

Another means of using *botulinum toxin* to "lift" and define the jawline is to inject them into specific muscles of sagging jowls. Jowls refer to the lower part of a person's cheek that can become "fleshier" and more droopy as we age. This is one of the



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most common facial features that people associate with ageing and, unfortunately, tends to affect women more than men. As the jowls start to droop, the jawline becomes less defined. The facial profile thus becomes wider and more squarish as we mature.

It is generally agreed that the best form of treatment for sagging jowls (especially if they are large) is a face lift, possibly combined with liposuction to remove the excess fat. However, for those with minimal sagging jowls and are not wanting to undergo surgery, *botulinum toxin* may be a possibility. By injecting *botulinum toxin* into specific muscles, the effects of the muscles pulling the jawline down are nullified, and thus the jawline becomes visibly lifted and more contoured.

Although *botulinum toxin* can lift jowls, its effectiveness really does depend on the extent of the sagging. The main advantage of using *botulinum toxin* to lift the jowls rather than surgery is the fact that there is no recovery period required. The *botulinum toxin* procedure can be carried out very quickly and it is extremely safe.

Fillers for Chin Enhancement

The chin is an important feature of the lower third of the face, and its enhancement may also be considered to further harmonise facial features. By

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enhancing the chin, the jawline can be sharpened, the profile of the face balanced, and the apparent amount of excess

skin and fat in the neck can be reduced.

It's not uncommon to combine both *botulinum toxin* to the masseters or chin muscles (mentalis) and chin enhancement with fillers to elongate the face and accentuate the V-shape profile of the jawline. Small amounts of *botulinum toxin* may be injected also into the mentalis for patients who have creasing of the chin when they push their lower lip up and out, causing it to recede upwards and appear shortened. *Botulinum toxin* relaxes the mentalis muscles, and thus "lengthens" the chin.

Temporary dermal fillers can also be injected into the areas of the chin to improve the shape and forward protrusion of the chin. The results from this treatment can last around six to 18 months depending on the type of filler used. The downtime, swelling and bruising associated with this procedure are minimal, and most patients are

able to return to their normal activities almost immediately.

People with a small or a protracted chin are good candidates for dermal fillers into the chin. This is particularly common in Asian patients. Chin augmentation helps to create a more triangular and youthful appearance to lower the face. This can be combined with jaw line contouring and cheek augmentation to recreate the youthful triangle of beauty that is often seen in models.

In summary, with the advancements in technology, contouring the jawline is now made possible even to the busy patient, with lesser downtimes and side effects. However, a proper consultation and assessment prior to any treatment plan is absolutely essential in ensuring the most suitable treatments are rendered. eh



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