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THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 1989

Cheekbone implants give faces a liftBy Marilyn Elias
USA TODAY

Devotees of a new plastic surgery technique tout it as the cheaper, faster and less-invasive alternative to the face lift.

Submalar augmentation — a one-hour operation under a local anesthetic — inserts solid silicone implants below the cheekbones through an incision in the mouth.

It's cheaper — \$1,000-\$3,000 vs. \$5,000-plus for a four-hour face lift — and heals faster, says Dr. William Binder, a UCLA clinical faculty member.

"It builds up the supporting tissue and gives a fuller, younger look to cheeks that have started to sag," Binder says. He studied 170 patients for an average of 3½ years and will report his first research results this May in an American Medical Association journal.

There's no word yet on side effects, but cancer from the implant may not be among them: "I don't see a great problem," says Dr. Charles Smart, chief of early detection for the National Cancer Institute. "Cancers arising at that particular site are almost negligible."

Gel implants used in breasts have been linked to cancer in animals, but an FDA panel last fall found there wasn't enough evidence to ban them.