



Eyebrow Reconstruction Article

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## Would YOU have an eyebrow transplant?

By DIANA APPLEYARD  
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**Last week, the Mail revealed women who have overplucked their eyebrows can now have a transplant to restore them to their former glory. But what does such a transplant entail?**

Surgeons remove hair from the patient's head and implant each follicle into the browline, where it will grow as normal.

The £3,000 operation also works for people whose brows haven't grown back properly after cancer treatment, or those who simply don't like their shape.

Nilza Martins, a 29-year-old PA from North London was one of the first women in the UK to have the treatment. She says:

'As I lay on my back while the surgeon was implanting hair follicles into my eyebrows, I began to think 'Why on Earth am I doing this?'



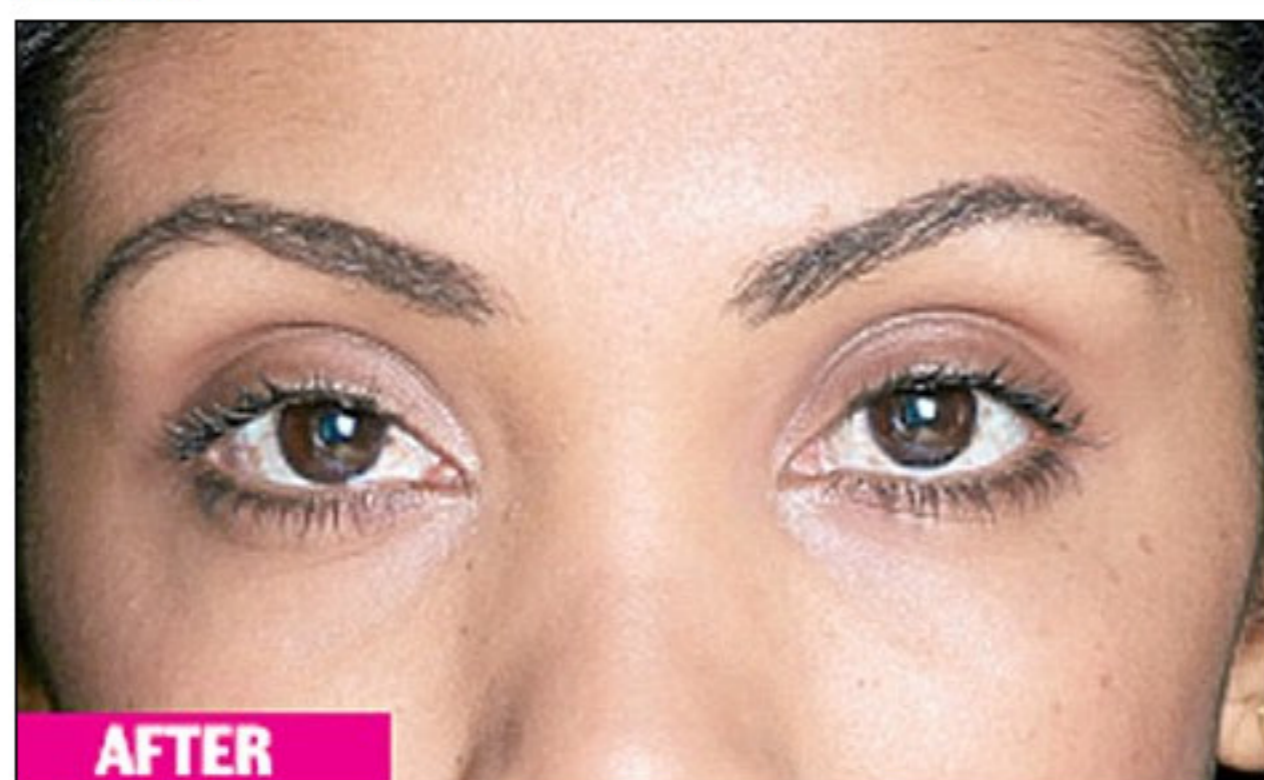
Nilza's eyebrows before the operation were patchy and thin...

'Part of me was really excited, but part of me was also scared about the outcome. Would it work or would it be an expensive disaster?'

'The surgery is so new and untried in the UK, I didn't have any comparisons. But I had become so paranoid about my lack of eyebrows that I was willing to try almost anything.'

'I wanted my eyebrows to look as natural as possible, but all I would be able to do for the next few weeks was wait. It takes at least a month for the swelling and redness to go down, and then a further month for the hair to start growing naturally.'

'But now, three months after the surgery, I am absolutely delighted. One of my great fears was that, as the hair on my head is curly, the hairs might grow in different directions, but the brows are growing perfectly straight. All I have to do is trim them with nail scissors every week, as the hair does keep growing as it would if it was still on my head.'



... but after the procedure they are fuller and more shapely

'Like so many women, I started plucking my eyebrows when I was 12. Throughout my teens I groomed them into a thin line - which was fashionable at the time - and nobody told me that once you've plucked them so often, the hair simply does not grow back.'

'Gradually, my eyebrows disappeared. I used to draw them on with eyebrow pencil, but I hated it as it looked so unnatural. Whenever I looked in the mirror it was all I could see - it was destroying my self-confidence.'

'By the time I was 24, I was becoming desperate to do something about them. I did think about permanently tattooing them on. Then I heard about eyebrow transplants taking place in the U.S., but I was worried because it sounded risky. By this time I was so paranoid about my lack of eyebrows, I'd take hours doing my make-up, drawing in my eyebrows with pencil, then getting frustrated, rubbing them off and starting again. I simply did not look the way I wanted to look.'

'So when I heard eyebrow transplants were being pioneered in the UK earlier this year, I began looking at a few clinics. I went along for a consultation at the Harley Street Hair Clinic.'

'I liked the fact that the surgeon I met aimed to give me a natural shape. I decided to use my savings and go ahead with the surgery, which costs around £2,000 to £3000.'

'Just before the operation I did feel very nervous in case it went wrong, but excited as well.'

'First, you lie on your front wearing a surgical gown and are given a local anaesthetic before an inch-square strip of hair is taken from the back of your head. This takes about an hour. Then the surgeon removes every hair from the piece of skin and cleans them under a microscope.'

'After being allowed around half an hour to recover, the painstakingly delicate implanting process begins. The surgeon makes between three and 50 tiny incisions with a scalpel where the eyebrow should be.'

'Then, using a long, thin needle, he inserts a hair follicle into each incision. It takes a long time - about four hours - and you have to be really patient, but I just kept telling myself that it would all be worth it.'

'Afterwards, as I gingerly sat up, I was told I mustn't wash my eyebrows for several days, should use an antiseptic spray daily and should take things easy.'

'When I first looked in the mirror I was quite shocked, as your eyebrows are left red and swollen, and there is some bruising of the eyelid as well. I put on some dark glasses and went home.'

'The incisions then scab, and after about a week you can gently wash them with baby shampoo. A lot of the hair seems to come away, but the hair follicles are quite deeply implanted and have already 'taken' by then, so new hair starts to grow.'

'However, you do have to be patient as it takes around two months to have what would be described as 'normal' eyebrows. In my case it took three weeks for all the redness to go and about a month before I had eyebrows, although the hairs were very short. I couldn't believe it and kept looking in a mirror.'

'Now, after three months, they are absolutely extraordinary and you can't tell that I haven't always had these eyebrows. It's wonderful. It has made my face look completely different.'

'Before, I wouldn't go out without make up and drawing in my eyebrows, but now I feel quite happy to go out bare and friends tell me I look really different. I feel much more natural, as if this is how my face should look.'

'People might say, 'Oh, they're only eyebrows', but when you don't have them it really has quite a deep psychological effect on your self-confidence. It made me really miserable, but now I feel much more at home with myself and the way that I look. I am really happy that I have had it done.'

'I am back to my normal self now and it's hard to imagine what I looked like without eyebrows. It's amazing how quickly you forget how much of an issue it was. When I look at photographs of myself without them it is like looking at a different person.'

'I have so much passion for this treatment, it really has changed my life. I know it sounds weird to say, I have had my eyebrows transplanted, but now I don't even think about them - the only maintenance they need is a trim with nail scissors once a month.'

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