

STARK ART SURGERY

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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER FACELIFT SURGERY

These instructions apply specifically to your facelift procedure. If any information here differs from your general postoperative instructions, please follow these facelift-specific guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns during your recovery, please contact our office.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY

Proper positioning and gentle care during the first several days are essential for a smooth recovery.

HEAD ELEVATION

Keep your head elevated the evening after surgery and for approximately two weeks. Sleeping in a recliner at about a 45-degree angle is often helpful. Keep your neck in a neutral position to avoid tension on your incisions. Sleep on your back only during the early recovery period and avoid rolling onto your side or face.

ACTIVITY

Rest during the first few days, but walk periodically around your home to promote circulation. Short, slow walks—such as walking to the restroom and back—are appropriate. Avoid bending over, straining, or lifting heavy objects.

INCISION CARE

Proper incision care helps promote healing and reduce the risk of complications. Keep incision lines clean and dry. Avoid frequent use of hydrogen peroxide or alcohol-based solutions, as they may interfere with healing.

Gently clean the areas in front of and behind the ears where incisions are located. Take care not to pull the earlobe forward, as this may place tension on healing sutures. After cleaning, apply a generous layer of Aquaphor, bacitracin, or Polysporin using a clean cotton swab, as directed by your surgeon.

SHOWERING AND HAIR CARE

You may shower beginning on the second day after surgery, unless otherwise instructed. Daily showers are recommended after this time. Use a gentle shampoo, such as a mild baby shampoo. Be cautious when washing your hair and avoid rubbing or placing tension on the incision areas. Do not use a round brush while blow-drying for the first three weeks, as this may disrupt healing.

SUTURE REMOVAL

Most sutures are removed approximately one week after surgery, with additional sutures removed around two weeks. Your surgeon will evaluate your healing during follow-up visits and adjust timing as needed.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING RECOVERY

Healing varies from patient to patient, but the following experiences are common and temporary.

SWELLING

Swelling is a normal part of the healing process and may increase slightly during the first three to four days before improving. Most swelling resolves within two to three weeks, though mild residual swelling may fluctuate for several months. To help reduce swelling:

- Keep your head elevated
- Avoid bending, straining, or heavy lifting
- Limit sun exposure during early healing

BRUISING AND DISCOLORATION

Bruising varies among patients but typically improves within two weeks. Makeup may usually be applied around 14 days after surgery, once approved by your surgeon.

NUMBNESS AND SENSATION CHANGES

Temporary numbness is very common after facelift surgery. You may experience tingling, “pins and needles,” or mild sensitivity as nerves heal. These sensations are normal and gradually improve over several weeks to months.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS

To protect your results and support proper healing, please follow these guidelines:

- No strenuous exercise for at least 3 weeks
- No heavy lifting for 3 weeks
- Avoid excessive head turning or neck strain for 4 weeks
- Avoid pull-over clothing for approximately 2 weeks

- Avoid hard or chewy foods for about 2 weeks
- Limit wide mouth opening or excessive yawning for the first 2 weeks
- Delay hair coloring for at least 4 weeks
- Avoid driving for at least 1–2 weeks, depending on comfort and medication use

Your surgeon will guide you on safely returning to normal activities.

SUN PROTECTION

Protecting your skin from sun exposure is essential during recovery. Avoid prolonged sun exposure for at least 2–3 months. Once appropriate, use sunscreen and wear protective hats when outdoors. Early sun exposure may increase swelling and affect scar healing.

LONG-TERM HEALING

While many patients recover quickly, healing continues gradually over time. Most visible swelling improves within 4–6 weeks, but final results continue to refine over several months. Subtle improvements in contour, texture, and scar appearance may continue for up to one year after surgery. Patience during this phase is important as your results continue to evolve.

FACELIFT RECOVERY TIMELINE

Every patient heals at a slightly different pace, but most follow a general recovery pattern.

FIRST 24-48 HOURS

Rest and allow your body to recover. Keep your head elevated at all times and sleep on your back. Mild swelling, tightness, and bruising are normal. Take medications as directed.

DAYS 3-5

Swelling and bruising may temporarily increase before improving. Continue head elevation, incision care, and light walking.

WEEK 1

You will typically return for a follow-up appointment. Many sutures are removed at this time. Swelling and bruising remain visible but begin to improve. Light daily activity is acceptable.

WEEK 2

Most bruising fades. Many patients feel comfortable resuming limited social activities. Makeup may be applied once approved. Remaining sutures may be removed.

WEEKS 3-4

Swelling continues to improve significantly. Light exercise may resume if cleared. Incisions begin to soften and fade.

WEEKS 4-6

Most patients return to normal routines. Exercise levels can gradually increase. Residual swelling is minimal but may fluctuate slightly.

3 MONTHS

Most visible swelling has resolved. Your appearance continues to refine and look more natural.

6-12 MONTHS

Final results continue to develop as tissues settle and scars mature.

TIPS FOR A SMOOTH FACELIFT RECOVERY

You can support your healing by following a few simple guidelines:

- Keep your head elevated during the first two weeks
- Avoid heavy lifting, bending, and strenuous activity early on
- Protect your skin from sun exposure
- Follow all incision care instructions carefully
- Attend all scheduled follow-up appointments

WHEN TO CONTACT OUR OFFICE

Please contact our office promptly if you experience:

- Bleeding that continues after applying pressure for 10 minutes
- Increasing redness, warmth, or unusual drainage

- Fever
- Sudden increase in pain or swelling
- Any symptoms that feel unusual or concerning