

POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS: FACELIFT

Once your surgery is completed, you must follow all the instructions given to you in order to heal properly and have a good outcome.

The following instructions are your obligation. Use this as a checklist of progress as you heal. Included are normal post-surgical experiences and key health considerations that may be a cause of concern.

TYPICAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS

Typical symptoms of facelift surgery and signs to watch for following a facelift include:

Tightness or numbness of the cheeks, face and neck: Bruising and swelling beneath the eyes. A pale, swollen complexion: These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication will help you cope with any discomfort. **Consistent sharp pain should be reported to our office immediately.**

If you have a drain placed in any incision, you may also experience localized discomfort at the drain site.

CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- **A high fever, (over 101°) severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior, such as hallucinations.**
- **Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication.**
- **Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.**
- **Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.**
- **A severely misshapen appearance or excessive bruising or fluid retention that is localized to one region.**

To alleviate any discomfort, and to reduce swelling, you may apply cool (not cold) compresses to your eyes. Do not apply ice or anything frozen directly on the skin. Soak soft plain white washcloths or gauze squares in ice water and wring out well. Apply directly to the eyes, but not to the cheeks or neck. Do not apply any pressure. Apply cool compresses for no longer than 20-minute intervals. Do not apply any heat.

COMPRESSION

You may be placed in a compression garment or wrap immediately following surgery. Wear this exactly as directed. Remove it only as directed for cleansing incisions or showering.

DAY OF SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

You will only be released to the care of a responsible adult. All of these instructions must be clear to the adult who will monitor your health and support you around the clock in the first 24 hours following surgery.

Rest, but not bed rest: While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory: meaning that you are walking under your own

strength. Spend 10 minutes every 2 hours engaged in light walking indoors as you recover.

Recline, do not lie down: This will be more comfortable for you, and can reduce swelling. Always keep your head elevated. Do not bend forward or over.

Good nutrition: Fluids are critical following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free and green tea-free beverages including fruit juices and water, milk and yogurt drinks. You must consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2 hours. Stick with soft, bland, nutritious food for the first 24 hours.

Good nutrition: Fluids are critical following surgery. Stick to non-carbonated, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free and green tea-free beverages including fruit juices and water, milk and yogurt drinks. You must consume at least 8 ounces of fluid every 2 hours. Stick with soft, bland, nutritious food for the first 24 hours.

Take all medication, exactly as prescribed. Oral pain medication, antibiotics and other medications you must take include:

Keep your incisions clean. Your incisions will seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. A cotton swab soaked in warm water is appropriate for cleansing incisions. Do not remove any crusting near your stitches. Do not remove any staples, sutures or steri-strips. If you have any drains placed, follow the instructions for cleansing and caring for drains.

Do not smoke. Smoking can greatly impair your safety prior to surgery and your ability to heal following surgery. You must not smoke.

Relax. Do not engage in any stressful activities. Let others tend to you.

TWO TO SEVEN DAYS FOLLOWING SURGERY

During this time you will progress with each day that passes. Ease into your daily activities. You will receive clearance

to begin driving or return to work at your post operative visit, or within: _____ days.

Your post-operative visit is scheduled for: _____

- **Continue to cleanse wounds as directed; you may shower and shampoo your hair.** Take a warm, not hot shower. Do not rub your scalp or your incisions. Use a mild shampoo and no styling products. If you must dry your hair, do so only with a hand-held hair dryer on the coolest setting and do not allow the compressed air to blow directly onto your incisions or your face.
- **Apply ointment and skincare as directed.** Do not use any glycolic, retinoid or other potentially irritating skincare products on your face until you receive clearance to do so.
- **Take antibiotic medications and supplements as directed.** Take pain medication only as needed. You may wish to switch from prescription pain medication to acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- **Continue to wear dark lens, large framed sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat whenever you are outdoors.** You may begin wearing reading glasses as soon as it is comfortable for you.
- **Continue to keep your head elevated, including when sleeping.**
- **Do not resume any exercise other than regular walking.** Walking is essential every day to prevent the formation of blood clots.

- **Maintain a healthy diet. Do not smoke. Do not consume alcohol.**

Post-operative treatment: Make certain to schedule all of the post-operative treatments as prescribed:

_____ _____

ONE TO FOUR WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

As you resume your normal daily activities, you must continue proper care and healing.

- **Continue your wound care as directed. If your incisions are within the scalp:** Do not use any styling products or tools until all stitches are removed AND until your incisions no longer have any crusting or scabbing. **If your incisions are on the skin:** Do not use any make-up until the stitches are removed AND until your incisions no longer have any crusting or scabbing.
- **Refrain from direct sun exposure.** Continue to wear your sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat. If you are outdoors, apply at least an SPF 30 at least 30 minutes prior to sun exposure. Your face is highly susceptible to sunburn or the formation of irregular, darkened pigmentation.
- **Do not smoke.** While incisions may have healed, smoking deprives your body of necessary oxygen that can result in poorly healed, wide, raised scars.
- **Refrain from any strenuous exercise and from bending or lifting.**
- **You may begin sleeping in a modified reclining position.** However do not sleep lying flat or on your stomach. If you are a side sleeper, two pillows under your head and a soft pillow under your mid-back and shoulders may offer more comfort.

Follow-up as directed. Your second post-operative visit is scheduled for: _____

SIX WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY

Healing will progress; swelling and bruising continue to diminish.

- **You may ease into your regular fitness routine.** However protective eyewear and a hat are necessary when outdoors.
- **Discomfort or tightness and tingling in your face will resolve.**
- **No need to resume smoking.** You have now gone 10 weeks (4 weeks prior to surgery and 6 weeks following) without a cigarette. For your long-term health, there is no need to resume smoking.
- **You may notice some hair loss at incision sites within the scalp.** This is normal. If it becomes excessive, or the hair is shedding in clumps, please notify our office.

YOUR FIRST YEAR

- **Continue good skincare and sun protection, healthy nutrition and fitness.**
- **Schedule any complementary procedures, as recommended.** Botulinum injections or specific skincare treatments may be recommended to enhance your results, and to help your results to be long-lasting.

- **Your scars will continue to refine.** If they become raised, red or thickened, or appear to widen, contact our office. Early intervention is important to achieving well-healed scars. Scars are generally refined to fine incision lines one year after surgery.
- **A one-year post surgery follow-up is recommended.** However you may call our office at any time with your concerns or for needed follow-up.

Your appearance will change with age. Your facial appearance may change too. You may wish to undergo revision surgery at a late date to help maintain your appearance throughout life. Contact our office with any of your questions or concerns, at any time.