**NECK LIFT INSTRUCTIONS**

**PREPARING FOR SURGERY**

* Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks prior to surgery. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is ok.
* Stop taking herbal medications and vitamins 2 weeks before surgery as these may thin your blood.
* Refrain from smoking 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after surgery. Nicotine and tobacco can delay healing and result in scarring.
* Avoid significant sun exposure 2 weeks before surgery.
* Plan to take 10-14 days off work and 2 weeks before any major social events; after that the bruising is coverable with makeup and the swelling is significantly better.
* Arrange to have someone to drive you home from surgery and stay with you for at least 24 hours after the procedure.

**Shopping List**

1. Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment
2. Q-tips
3. Stool softener (docusate)
4. Tylenol (acetaminophen)
5. Baby/gentle shampoo
6. Easy to prepare, easy to chew meals and snacks
7. Optional-makeup to cover any bruising

**THE DAY OF SURGERY**

* Do not have anything to eat or drink (even water) after midnight the night before your surgery. Essential medications may be taken with a small sip of water the morning of your procedure.
* Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes that button or zip. Avoid slipover clothing.
* Leave your valuables at home; do not wear jewelry or piercings.
* Avoid all make-up, hairspray, and nail polish.
* Do not wear contacts, it is ok to wear glasses, if needed.
* Bring your ID with you.

**POST-OPERATIVE CARE**

**Dressing Care:**

* You will have a surgical dressing in place for approximately 24 hours. It will be removed by Dr. Harbison the day after your surgery. A support dressing will then be worn day and night for the first week.
* If a drain was placed you may leave it safety pinned to your shirt (without tension).
* Keep your incisions out of the shower for 48 hours. It is ok to gently wash your face with a washcloth. After 48 hours it is ok to gently wash your hair with baby shampoo.
* After your surgical dressing is removed, use a Q-tip to apply Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment to your incisions three times per day. Q-tips are preferred as using your finger increases the risk of infection.
* 1 week after surgery, you will have your sutures removed. At that time, you will wear your support dressing only at night.

**General Care:**

* Keep your head elevated for the first 48 hours. A recliner is best. Sleeping with extra pillows works as well. This will minimize swelling and help avoid rolling on the side of your face during sleep. Continuing to sleep with an extra pillow will help reduce swelling the weeks following surgery.
* Icepacks (or ice water soaks) may be used over the neck, face, and eyes. Do this for the first 48 hours to help with swelling and bruising.
* It is common for bruising to be noted on the neck and chest.
* You can resume your normal diet but avoid foods that require tall bites (ie Big Mac) for 1 week after surgery.
* It is ok to wear contacts the day after surgery, unless you also had a blepharoplasty. If you are going to wear glasses, they should not put pressure on your incisions.
* You may start wearing makeup 5 days after surgery but do not apply to incisions.
* A feeling of tightness is normal and will lessen in the first few weeks but may last up to 6 months.
* There will be areas of decreased sensation or numbness. The sensation will normalize with time. Be very careful to avoid trauma/burns when using curling irons, hot rollers, blow dryers, warm packs, and ice packs.
* After surgery, it is important to have a bowel movement within a day or two. If you do not, you may take over-the-counter stool softeners to encourage your bowels to move.
* All patients are placed on antibiotics for a short time after surgery to prevent an infection. Please complete the entire course of medication as written on the bottle.
* Travel: you should wait to travel by air or long distances until cleared by Dr. Harbison. It is best to keep your car rides shorter than 60 minutes to avoid blood clots.
* Sunscreen should be applied to the external scars starting 2-3 weeks after surgery. It is important to protect your scars for *AT LEAST* 1 year to prevent discoloration from the sun. Sunscreen with SPF 30 and above is always recommended to prevent skin cancer and signs of aging/sun damage.
* Resuming physical activities:
	+ Light activity (preparing meals, walking around the house) is encouraged immediately to prevent blood clots but no heavy lifting greater than 10 pounds, bending over, or straining until cleared by Dr. Harbison.
	+ Driving: once you are no longer taking pain medications
	+ Sports: 6 weeks
	+ Swimming, sauna, hot tub: 3-4 weeks or as directed by Dr. Harbison
	+ Scuba diving: 12 weeks

Please call our office at 402.739.8144 at any time with questions or concerns. After hours, you may call our office and follow the prompts to speak to the on call nurse. If you are experiencing a life-threating emergency, please go to the nearest emergency department.