

RICARDO A. MEADE, MD

Post-Operative Instructions Facelift

REV 9/9/13

Home Care Instructions

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for a few days.
- Follow a balanced, LOW SODIUM diet. Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet. Over the counter stool softeners are recommended to help prevent constipation.
- Take pain medication and antibiotics as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin for 2 weeks following surgery.
- DO NOT drink alcohol while taking pain medications.
- DO NOT SMOKE, as smoking delays wound healing and increases the risk of wound complications.

Activities

- Start walking (as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots).
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- You will need to avoid lifting over 10 pounds for 4-6 weeks, and expect to limit your normal activities of daily living during this time. You will be much more fatigued than usual and will need more rest during the first week post-operatively.
- No strenuous activities, including sex and heavy housework for at least 2 weeks. (Walking and mild stretching are fine.)
- Return to work in 14-21 days.
- Keep head elevated; sleep with head on 2 pillows for at least 3 weeks following surgery to minimize swelling.
- Keep your head above your heart, avoid bending over.
- Do not sit with your chin down while reading, knitting, etc.
- Keep your head up and chin extended out when resting to prevent a crease or fold from developing under the chin/neck.
- DO NOT twist your head side to side. Turn your head by turning your shoulders. (This protects your face and neck incisions.)
- Be careful when pulling clothing over your head to avoid pulling the ears.

Drains

- If you have drains, please refer to the handout "CARE OF YOUR JACKSON-PRATT DRAINS".
- **YOU MAY NOT SHOWER while your drains are in place.** You may shower 48 hours after drains have been removed.
- If a drain was used, it will usually be removed in 1-2 days.

Hair/Face Care

- DO NOT use hair dye or permanent solution or other chemical treatments on hair for 3 weeks following surgery.
- Hair is generally shampooed on the 2nd or 3rd post-op day. The area of sutures must be washed gently but thoroughly each time.
- DO NOT set hairdryer on hot, use curlers, curling/flat iron, etc as you may not have feeling in operated areas and you can be burned very easily. (Avoid heat for 3 weeks.)
- Be very gentle when caring for your hair. No brushing, pulling or rubbing on the hair around the suture lines.
- You may use makeup after the sutures are removed; new facial makeup can be used to cover up bruising; but not on the incisions. It is important to gently remove all makeup.
- It is very important to use ReFresh PM at night and any time you sleep to avoid getting dry eyes.
- Use ReFresh Plus drops every 2-3 hours during the day while you are awake.
- Do not sleep under a ceiling fan or close to heating/cooling vents (these cause dry eyes).
- Wearing a sleep mask may be helpful the first few days.

Incision Care

- You may bathe 48 hours after surgery.
- Avoid steam baths and saunas for several months.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. If sun exposure is unavoidable, use sunblock SPF 30 or greater.
- Direct sun exposure or tanning beds should be avoided for 6 weeks following surgery as fresh scars will permanently pigment (turn brown).
- Keep incisions clean and dry and inspect daily for infection.
- Clean incisions very gently with half strength peroxide (use tap water to dilute). Q-tips will work perfectly to remove crusts from suture lines.
- Apply ointment twice a day to suture lines but not on stitches that are in your hair.

What to Expect

- Pale, bruised and puffy face for several weeks
- Wear scarves, turtlenecks and high-collared blouses to mask swelling and discoloration.
- By the 3rd week you will look/feel much better.
- Final result is not fully realized for approximately 6 months.

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- Maximum discomfort should occur in the first few days, improving each day thereafter.
- Bruising, swelling, numbness, tightness and tenderness of skin for 10-14 days or longer
- You will wear a facial compression dressing for compression and support.
- Skin may feel dry and rough for several months.
- Face may look/feel strange and look distorted from the swelling.
- Men have a need to shave behind their ears where beard-growing skin is repositioned.

Follow-Up Care

- Sutures are usually removed from in front of the ear in 3-5 days.
- Remaining sutures and metal clips (if used) are usually removed in 1-2 weeks.
- If a drain was used it will generally be removed in 1-2 days.

IMPORTANT- Call the office (214-823-1691) for any increased redness, swelling, foul-smelling wound drainage, wound separation, severe/uncontrolled pain or temperature >101.5, bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure, loss of feeling or motion. Do not hesitate to call for any other questions or concerns.

**IF you have not already scheduled a follow up post-operative appointment, PLEASE call the office at 214-823-1691 to set up your appointment.

Patient _____ Nurse _____ Date _____