



## **Post Operative Facelift and Midface Lift care**

These instructions should be carefully read and followed. They are designed to answer the most commonly asked questions regarding post-operative care.

### **POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: AFTER SURGERY**

1. Post-operatively expect localized swelling and bruising to your face. Swelling usually peaks by the third day after surgery and then slowly resolves over the following weeks. Bruising usually resolves near the end of the second week of healing. Often swelling will be worse when you arise in the morning and usually decrease throughout the day. The majority of swelling dissipates during the first month. Usually 70% is gone by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, 80% by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, and 90% by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> week. For patients with thick or oily skin, it takes longer for the swelling to subside. It may take 6-12 months for the last 5-10% of swelling to resolve.
2. Parts of the face may feel “numb” after the operation. This is to be expected and is usually temporary. It may take several weeks or on rare occasions, months to subside.

### **ACTIVITY:**

1. Limit your activity sharply over the first week following surgery.
2. You are encouraged to walk around the house on the day of surgery and thereafter. This helps to prevent blood clots from developing in the legs. Move/pump your legs frequently while lying down. This also helps in preventing blood clots from developing.
3. Keep your head elevated on 2-3 pillows for the first 48 hours to reduce swelling in the early post-operative period. Continued head elevation over the next 2 weeks aids in reducing swelling.
4. Keep your emotions under control. It is not unusual to feel a bit depressed for a few days after surgery. This quickly passes as you begin to look and feel better. Anger, crying or other emotional outbursts will only add to the swelling or increase the likelihood of bleeding.
5. Avoid bending over or lifting heavy objects greater than 10lbs for 2 weeks. Besides aggravating the swelling, this may raise your blood pressure and cause bleeding.
6. Avoid exertional activity for at least 7 days. No athletic activities, intercourse, or straining when going to the bathroom. If you become constipated, please call your Doctor so that a stool softener can be prescribed. You may begin to return to regular exercise 3 weeks post-surgery. Ease into this, gradually, increasing your exercise level back to normal by 5-6 weeks from surgery.
7. Take deep breaths often when you get home for the first 24hrs after surgery. This helps to expand the base of your lungs.

### **DIET:**

1. Alcohol consumption should also be limited as this may raise the blood pressure and initiate bleeding. Do not drink alcohol during the first week.
2. Drink plenty of fluids following surgery, as dehydration can contribute to nausea.
3. You may want to avoid foods that require much chewing, such as steak. Soft foods may be easier to eat.
4. Small amounts of food 20 minutes before taking post-operative medications (especially pain medications and/or antibiotics) can prevent nausea.
5. If you vomit or feel nauseated, you should delay food and pain medications until the nausea passes.

6. Take only 2-3 ounces of clear liquid at hourly intervals until the nausea subsides. If the symptom persists, call for anti-nausea medications, as subsequent vomiting may be harmful and lead to complications.

#### **BATHING:**

1. You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Most patients need some assistance with hair washing and are cautioned to be gentle when cleansing near the surgical sites. We recommend baby shampoo as it is gentle to your healing tissue. Allow the soapy water to run over your skin or scalp.

#### **WOUND CARE:**

1. Keep your initial dressings dry. We will remove your dressings the first day after your surgery.
2. You will be instructed about caring for your drain at your preoperative visit. Please empty this if needed, and record amount that was discarded.
3. Ice packs should be used within the first 48hrs after surgery to help with swelling. Apply ice for 15-20 minutes out of each hour while awake. Be sure they are lightweight. Never apply ice directly to the skin. Dipping gauze pads into iced water works well.
4. Wound care during this time period consists of continued head elevation, gentle wound cleansing with baby peroxide and water, and Emollient (Hydrabalm, Aquaphor, or Vaseline) application to the surgical incisions, to keep moist to help prevent crusting on the incision line.
5. Wear a Jaw Bra at all times for the first two weeks unless taking a shower.
6. Return one week after surgery for suture removal.
7. If bleeding occurs, elevate your head, apply direct pressure and apply cold compresses. If bleeding does not stop within 10 minutes call your Doctor. Excessive swelling or bruising or increasing pain on one side of your face may represent blood trapped under the skin and should be reported to your Doctor immediately.
8. Please notify the office if you have excessive redness, swelling, increasing pain or tenderness or drainage from your surgical sites as this may be a sign of infection.
9. Camouflage make-up to disguise bruising can be applied to areas without surgical incisions as early as one week after surgery. Make-up may be applied to the surgical scars approximately one week after the sutures are removed. Make-up, however, should never be applied to any areas of crusting or incomplete wound healing.
10. Try to avoid hitting or bumping your face.
11. Avoid sun exposure post-operatively for at least 12 months as it can thicken and darken your incisions. After your incisions have healed appropriately (usually around 2-3 weeks post-op), begin wearing sunblock (SPF 30 or greater) and wide brimmed hats to prevent sun exposure.

#### **PAIN MANAGEMENT:**

1. It is unusual to have significant pain after aging face procedure. If the prescribed medication does not control pain, please report this to us. There is discomfort, of course, but remember that this will quickly pass.
2. Some swelling and bruising is to be expected. Bruising is treated with Arnica, an herb that will be provided by our office. Swelling and bruising is maximal at 48 hours post-surgery and gradually subsides over the following 10-14 days.
3. Infection is also unusual. Fever, localized swelling with redness and tenderness may signify a developing infection and should be reported. Appropriate treatment will be initiated.
4. Take your pain medications as directed. Consider taking the medications around the clock on a schedule in order to control the pain and not 'get behind' on the pain medication. Continue to avoid aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, as they may increase the risk of bleeding underneath the skin.

**OTHER COMMON INSTRUCTIONS AFTER SURGERY:**

1. A responsible adult must provide transportation for you after surgery (public transportation is not permissible) and remain with you until the morning after the procedure. If you are having several procedures, you may need assistance for 1-2 days following your procedure.
2. You will need to arrange transportation for your appointment at our office on the day following surgery. DO NOT drive for 24 hours after surgery or anytime that you are taking pain medications.
3. Avoid making major decisions or participating in activities requiring judgement for 24 hours after surgery.
4. Do not smoke or use tobacco products, as this interferes with the blood supply to the healing tissues and slows subsequent healing.
5. Do not drink alcoholic beverages while taking pain medications or antibiotics.
6. Take all medications as instructed postoperatively
7. Avoid excess sunlight to the incisions for at least a year. Even mild sunburn may cause prolonged swelling or irritation of the healing incisions. Use sunscreen with Zinc Oxide and SPF 20 or greater to help decrease the visibility of the scar
8. Do not compare your progress with that of other patients. Remember that everyone's healing process is unique. Also, if you have any questions or concerns, call on us. Your family and friends may mean well but you can receive wrong information.

**PLEASE CALL FOR THE FOLLOWNG CONCERNS:**

1. Continuous or heavy bleeding.
2. Fever of 101 degrees F or greater.
3. Swelling/Redness/Increasing pain/Foul Drainage from incision area.
4. Increasing pain.
5. Difficulty breathing or chest pain.
6. Continued nausea or vomiting.

**If you have any questions or concerns after you leave the surgical facility, please call the office at 210-468-5426.**