



Facelift Post-Operative Care **Guide**

WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE THE SURGERY?

- Have someone drive you to the clinic and stay with you later on for at least 3-4 days.
- You will be asked to eat or drink nothing for at least 6 hours before the procedure. You can, however, take your blood pressure medications with a sip of water at their appointed time.
- Wear loose and comfortable clothes to the clinic and have a change of clothes ready, in case the first ones get soiled.
- Do not take Dispirin or any other NSAID (Brufen, Dicloran, etc.) for 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after your surgery unless you first discuss it with your surgeon.
- If you are a smoker, you should not smoke for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 3 weeks after surgery. Smoking and chewing tobacco inhibit your circulation and can significantly compromise your surgical outcome.
- You should thoroughly wash your hair with an antibacterial or soap the night before surgery. You may also be given a prescription for antibiotic ointment before surgery. If so, apply a small amount to the inside of the nose three times a day for three days prior to surgery.
- It is of utmost importance to tell your doctor ahead of time if you have ever been on any blood thinners, received radiation therapy to the head or neck, had any prior procedure done on your face (including fillers, botox & threads), taken steroids or immunosuppressive agents.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER THE SURGERY?

- There will be a mild to moderate amount of pain and discomfort associated with the surgery. This should be easily controlled with oral medications. The discomfort and pain should begin to decrease within 48 hours after surgery.
- Bruising and swelling are to be expected after the surgery. These symptoms will gradually subside over the next 10-14 days. To minimize the swelling you should sleep with your head elevated for a couple of weeks after the surgery.
- It is not unusual to have some slight drainage for the first 48 hours after surgery. A bulky cotton compression dressing with drains will cover your scalp and face for 1-7 days after surgery. It serves to help prevent blood collections under the skin.
- During your first post-operative visit, the bulky dressing and, usually the drains, will be removed. You will then be placed in a supportive elastic face garment that is to be worn continuously, unless showering, for the first 7 to 10 days. After this time, it should be worn at night only for the next 3 weeks.

CALL THE OFFICE PROMPTLY IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Development of a temperature elevation exceeding 100°F.
- Unusual bleeding or discharge from the incision.
- A significant progressive increase in pain which is not easily relieved by taking your prescribed medication.
- Repeated or violent vomiting.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MYSELF AFTER SURGERY?

- Make arrangements to have someone drive you to, and from, your surgery.
- Having someone stay with you on at least 3-4 days after your surgery.
- Take the antibiotics and pain medication only as prescribed by the office.
- To minimize swelling, you may use cool, clean compresses or ice wrapped in a dry cloth. Apply these gently to your face four to six times a day for the first twenty four hours after surgery.
- Sleep with the head elevated for 3 weeks after surgery.
- External sutures should be kept clean and dry. Dissolvable sutures will disappear on their own within 2-3 months. Non-dissolvable sutures should usually be removed within 1 week of surgery. Surgical staples used within the hairline, will be removed gradually over several visits.
- You should do no vigorous exercise and should avoid any significant physical exertion, lifting or straining for a minimum of 3 weeks after your surgery, as this activity could disrupt your wound healing.
- You may shower or bathe on the 3rd day after surgery. Use only tepid water. When brushing or combing your hair, use care around the incisions for the first 3 weeks. Often, having a friend or family member brush your hair is helpful. Do not rub, wash or massage your face until after you are examined and told it is all right to do so. Likewise, do not wear make-up until your surgeon says that it is all right to do so.
- Contact lenses should not be worn for the first 5-7 days after surgery, as placing them into your eye may put some strain on your healing face.
- Tightness during mouth opening is not uncommon. Likewise, a feeling of tightness in your neck is also not unusual after surgery. This sensation is most pronounced in the first 1-2 days after surgery, while the bulky dressing is in place. This dressing may give rise to a slight sense of labored breathing or a mild difficulty with swallowing. While healing, turn your head from the shoulders, rather than twisting your neck.
- It is not unusual during the healing phase, to note some irregularities under the skin. These small distortions will gradually subside and eventually resolve. Small bumps under the skin are present where sutures were placed to resuspend the muscles of the face and neck.
- The skin often feels stiff while it is healing. Although most of these things resolve over a period of several weeks, be prepared to wait at least 6 months for your facelift to completely heal inside and out.

RECOVERY TIMETABLE

Approximate recovery after facelift is as follows:

- **DAY 1:** Return home. Use cool compresses or ice for 24 hours.
- **DAY 2-3:** Maximum bruising and swelling.
- **DAY 5-10:** Stitches, staples removed or dissolving. Bruising starting to go away. Bulky dressing removed by post-operative day 7.
- **WEEK 1:** Wear elastic garment at all times except when showering.
- **WEEKS 3-4:** Wear elastic garment at night only. Swelling much improved. Some areas of the face and neck will feel quite stiff. Residual bruising can be covered by make-up.

