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# **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACELIFT SURGERY**

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

### **ACTIVITY:**

- Limit your activity sharply over the first week following surgery.
- 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.
- When you rest or sleep, keep your head elevated 2-3 pillows and avoid turning of your side. If you overexert yourself, bleeding or prolonged swelling may result.
- 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.
- Avoid bending, lifting, pulling, pushing, straining and aerobic activities for 3 weeks.
- You may begin to return to regular exercise 3 weeks after surgery. Ease into this, gradually increasing your exercise level back to normal by 5-6 weeks from surgery.
- Take deep breaths often when you get home for the first 24 hours after surgery. This helps to expand the base of your lungs.

### **ORAL INTAKE:**

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

- If you vomit or feel nauseated, you should delay food and pain medications until the nausea passes.
- Take only 2-3 ounces of clear liquids at hourly intervals until the nausea subsides. If this symptom persists, call for anti-nausea medications, as subsequent vomiting may be harmful and lead to complications.

#### **BATHING:**

- Following surgery, you may bathe, but do not submerge your head in the water.
- Please follow the schedule below that outlines when you shower and gently wash your hair.
- You can gently shampoo your hair on the mornings of your postoperative appointments. These fall on day 4/5, day 7, and day 10/11.

#### **PAIN, SWELLING, BRUISING, INFECTION:**

- 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.
- Some swelling and bruising is to be expected. Bruising is treated with Arnica, an herb that can be purchased over the counter. Swelling and bruising is maximal at 48 hours' post-surgery and gradually subsides over the following 10-14 days.
- 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.
- Your final results will occur between 6-12 months.

#### **OTHER COMMON INSTRUCTIONS AFTER SURGERY**

- A responsible adult must provide transportation for you after surgery (public transportation is not permissible) and remain with you until the morning following the procedure.
- Do not drive for 5-7 days after surgery or anytime that you are taking pain medications.
- Avoid making major decisions or participating in activities requiring judgment for 24 hours.
- Smoking should be strictly avoided as it interferes with the blood supply to the healing tissues and slows subsequent healing.
- Take all medications as instructed postoperatively.
- 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.
- 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.

**INCISIONAL CARE:**

- Keep your initial dressings dry. We will remove your dressing in the office at your follow-up visit.
- You will be instructed about caring for your drain at your preoperative visit. Please empty this if needed, and record the amount.
- Ice packs should be used within the first 48 hours 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.
- Clean incisions around your ears and under your chin with peroxide, then apply bacitracin ointment twice a day.
- Wear ace wrap at all times for the first 5 days, then at night only for an additional 7 days.

**CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU DEVELOP ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:**

- Fever of 101 degrees F or greater.
- Pain not relieved with pain medication.
- Swelling, redness, bleeding, and/or foul drainage from an incision site.
- Persistent nausea and/or vomiting.

Any other concerns. Office Telephone: #: 201-751-9490

Your surgery will be performed safely and with care in order to obtain the best possible results.

You have the right to be informed that the surgery may involve risks of unsuccessful results, complications, or injury from both known and unforeseen causes. Because individuals vary in skin textures, tissue, circulation, and the healing process, as well as anesthetic reactions, there can be no guarantee made as to the results or potential complications.

I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT/IT HAS BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME AND I UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED.

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ MD: \_\_\_\_\_