

Care after Facelift

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after a facelift. This information will help you to remember the instructions given after surgery.

Appearance:

- You will have ointment over the suture lines in front of and behind the ear and all along the surgical incisions.
- You will have a drain sutured in place just below each ear.
- You may have bruising to the sides of your face, neck, and under your chin. You will have mild swelling. Occasionally, your eyes may be swollen shut for the first 2-3 days if you have eyelid surgery in combination with a facelift.
- It takes a few weeks for all the bruising and swelling to resolve.
- We ask that you do not apply make up for 2 weeks after surgery. After 2 weeks you may apply your make-up, avoiding application directly over incisions.
- Please avoid wearing glasses for 3 weeks. If glasses are needed, please speak with nursing for instruction on how to protect your incisions.
- Please avoid exposure to extreme cold weather, cold water and ice on your face for 1-2 weeks.

Activity/Bathing/Sleeping:

- Please avoid exertion, straining, bending, or lifting over 5 lbs for 3 weeks after surgery.
- We encourage walking short distances as early as the day of surgery.
- Depending on the type of work you do, you should be able to return to your job in 10 days or as soon as you are comfortable.
- You may drive when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication and feel comfortable.
- We ask that no showers are taken until the first post op appointment. Sponge bathing is fine. Avoid hot and cold water.
- Elevating your head by sleeping in a recliner or resting your head up on several pillows while in bed will help minimize swelling and discomfort.

Drain/Incision Care:

- Clean your incisions with a Q-tip and warm water, then apply bacitracin to your incisions at least twice a day.
- After 1 week, please switch from bacitracin to Aquaphor or moisturizing lotion.
- Avoid sun exposure and wear sunscreen with an SPF of 50+ to your incisions if they will be exposed to sun for 1 week after surgery.
- Your drains are held in place with stitches to your skin and should always be supported to avoid pulling on the drain.

- **Monitor your drain amounts daily and record. Please bring the drain sheet to your post op appointments. The “How to care for your drain” pamphlet has more detailed information.**
- Drains are generally removed in 3-5 days.

Diet:

- We recommend a diet consisting of high protein and easily digestible foods (i.e. toast, rice, bananas, eggs, chicken, oatmeal, protein shakes, etc.)
- Do not drink alcohol for a couple weeks after your surgery or while taking narcotic pain medicines
- Limit your salt intake to help decrease swelling.
- Please refer to the “Medications and Foods to Avoid” List provided in your Pre-Surgical email sent

Medication:

- We will prescribe an antibiotic, nausea medication, a stool softener, and pain medication for you. Follow the directions on the bottles for their use.
- The pain medication may make you feel drowsy, so please have someone assist you at home.
- 3-5 days after surgery, most patients will find that Tylenol will take care of the discomfort.
- Do not use aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin) or other NSAID medication for 7-10 days after surgery.
- **You will be asked to monitor your blood pressure after your operation. It is recommended to have a blood pressure cuff at home. Take your blood pressure 3 times a day. Dr. Totonchi will advise when to treat your blood pressure. One clonidine tablet can be taken once every 8 hours.**

Post-Operative Appointments:

- You will normally be seen in the office within 2-5 days of your surgery and then about 2 other times within the first month.
- You will then be seen periodically to monitor healing. Additional appointments may be necessary.

We are always available if you have any questions, please call 440-461-7999.

Post-Operative Concerns: Urgent problems after facelift surgery do not occur frequently. These are the complications that will require a change in your post-operative care:

- **Swelling:** Mild swelling is to be expected. If you have excessive swelling, please call the office.
- **Vision:** Sudden change or loss of vision.
- **Hematoma** (collection of blood under the skin) can occur within a few hours to a few days of your surgery. The warning signs are:
 - Severe pain
 - Significant swelling to an area on your face or neck
 - Excessive or growing bruising
- **Infection** is rare following facelift surgery. Signs of infection are:
 - Increased temperature, redness, swelling or drainage from incisions
- **Leg swelling** If you have a large amount of leg swelling (either in one or both legs), or if you experience pain in your legs, contact the office immediately.
- **Breathing problems** If you develop any chest pain or shortness of breath, you must contact the office or be seen in the nearest emergency facility without delay.
- **Medication reactions** may occur with the drugs prescribed for you. If you develop a skin rash, itching, vomiting, or diarrhea, stop taking your medication and call the office.

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