

After Your Facelift Surgery

How you will feel

You will be drowsy and tired following surgery due to the medicines we have given you to make you comfortable. Most patients doze on and off during the evening after surgery. The next day, you may still feel a bit tired, but try to resume everyday activities as soon as you can. You may move about normally without fear of disrupting your surgery. Your energy will return more rapidly if you do.

If you have nausea

Although we give anti-nausea medicines before, during and after your surgery, it's still not unusual to experience nausea. Relax, decrease your activity and don't eat any heavy foods-just try some clear liquids. All nausea should resolve 12 hours following surgery.

Discomfort

We've given you a pain medicine to be used as directed. Take a pain pill before going to sleep the evening of surgery (preferably after you have kept something in your stomach). Take another pain pill the morning following surgery as you may feel a bit stiff and uncomfortable when you begin to move about. After two days, extra strength Tylenol should control your discomfort well. Do not use aspirin, Advil or similar medicines for two weeks before and after surgery. These medicines cause bleeding and can damage your surgical result. If you have questions about a medicine, please ask us before using it.

Severe, deeply-felt pain in or under your surgical areas must be communicated to your doctor at once. It may represent bleeding underneath your skin and may result in permanent skin loss if not immediately treated.

Swelling

You may experience some swelling and bruising around your eyes, face and neck following surgery. This swelling will increase overnight. To reduce swelling, you may use a cool compress (eg. Frozen peas in a Ziploc bag) to the eyes and facial areas not covered with the dressing during the first 3 days following surgery. If possible, sleep with your head elevated on two pillows. Most of your swelling should subside over 4 to 5 days.

In anticipation of swelling, you may be prescribed a Medrol dose pack. Please take this medicine as directed

Fever

Fever of up to 101°F following surgery is common. Please call us should your fever reach 102°F.

Antibiotics and Infections

You received antibiotics in your IV prior to surgery, but will need to continue taking antibiotics prescribed after surgery. Infection after facelift surgery is very rare, but if you notice increased redness or swelling accompanied by tenderness or fever at any time, please call us so that we may examine you.

Surgical Dressing

During the first night following your surgery, you will have a tight surgical dressing around your face and neck. Do not remove your surgical dressing unless instructed to do so by your doctor. Your dressing serves to support the area where you had surgery and promote healing. Its removal could damage your final cosmetic result.

You may also have drains coming out from under your dressing. These drains help prevent the accumulation of blood beneath your skin. Both the drains and the tight surgical dressing will be removed by your doctor the morning following surgery.

Facelift Dressing

After the tight surgical dressing and the drains have been removed, you will be fitted with a secure but comfortable facelift dressing. This dressing should be worn continuously for the first week following surgery. It should only be removed to eat and bathe. You will be given a second facelift dressing to use in the event that your original dressing becomes soiled. These dressings may be washed and reused.

After the first week, we recommend wearing the dressing at night while asleep. You should do this for two weeks. This promotes the healing of your face and neck and reduces postoperative swelling.

Incision Care

Mupirocin antibiotic ointment should be placed along your suture line. This is best done gently with a Q-tip applicator while looking in the mirror.

Some discoloration around your suture line can be expected. However, should you experience a great deal of redness and itching around your suture line, please call our office. You may have a rare allergic reaction to either the sutures used or the ointment being applied to your suture line. Again, your doctor or his nurse will be able to help.

Sutures are placed in front of the ear and sometimes under the chin. We will remove these sutures during your first post-operative visit. Under no circumstances should you attempt to remove these sutures yourself. Such action could truly damage the results of your surgery. Other sutures behind your ears and along your hairline are designed to slowly dissolve over time and will not need to be removed.

Diet

Try to take only liquids or soft foods during the first 24 hours after surgery, and then increase your diet to normal as tolerated. Avoid very hot liquids and foods as these may cause bleeding. Also avoid alcohol for 1 week preceding surgery and for 1 week postoperatively, as it can prolong swelling and interfere with healing.

Personal Hygiene

Try to keep your facelift dressing clean and dry. You may shower or bathe the day after your surgery. You may use a dampened washcloth to gently clean your face. We recommend using a gentle facial cleanser (eg. Cetaphil). If possible, have someone wash your hair in the sink like they do at the hair salon. We recommend using baby shampoo.

Activity

During the evening following surgery, you should stay in bed with your head elevated on two to three pillows. You may go to the bathroom, but may need assistance.

Remember that the blood pressure in your face increases whenever you lower your head below the level of your heart-this may lead to nasal bleeding. Therefore, try to sleep on two or three pillows, and be very careful about bending over in the first two weeks following surgery.

You may slowly advance your physical activity. Aerobic exercise should be avoided for at least two weeks following surgery. In general, sports such as running, weight-lifting, tennis, golf and swimming may be resumed in approximately two weeks following surgery. Contact sports are prohibited for six weeks following surgery.

When in doubt, please ask your doctor before engaging in any physical activity that could damage the results of your surgery.

Numbness

Your ears will be numb for the first several weeks following surgery. This is normal, and your sensation will return as the skin nerves regrow following surgery. Your ears will finally feel totally normal 4-6 months after surgery. Very rarely, numbness in the upper portion of the ears remains permanent.

Cosmetics

We will be able to instruct you in what kind of make-up to use to cover up any bruising or discoloration in the immediate post-operative period. Generally speaking, cosmetics may be used following the first post-operative visit. Please do not use any facial make-up in the area of your surgery until your doctor says it is okay, because you could damage the results of your surgery.

Sun Exposure

Please avoid the sun. Excessive sun exposure can result in ugly scar formation and ruin the results of your surgery. In the first six months following surgery, you must always use a good sunblock (SPF 30 or higher) before going outside. A good habit to get into is using a sunblock as your morning skin moisturizer. That way you'll always be protected.

Medicines

Please resume all your normal medicines unless specifically instructed not to by your doctor.

Questions or Difficulties

If you have any questions or problems during office hours, please call 410-266-3900.

If you have any questions or problems at any other times please call 443-481-3024 and ask for the doctor on call.

