

Postoperative Care of Facelifts

Do not make decisions or sign legal documents, drive or operate heavy machinery or drink alcohol for 24 hours after your procedure. Be in the care of a responsible adult for the first 24 hours after your procedure.

No Smoking for as much time as possible prior to surgery (at least 2 weeks), and at least 2 weeks following surgery. Nicotine causes vasoconstriction (narrowing) of vessels, which decreases the amount of oxygen and nutrients needed to maintain viability of the flap. Smoking will increase the risk of necrosis to the flap.

Please follow these instructions carefully. Your final result will depend upon how well you care for the treated areas.

WEEK 1

(Beginning the day after surgery and continue until 2 week appointment)

DO:

- Clean suture lines located around the front and back of the ear with **hydrogen peroxide** on a Q-tip 4-6 times daily.
- Following each peroxide treatment apply a small amount of **over the counter ointment** (*Bacitracin, Polysporin, Neosporin*) to the suture lines following cleaning. It is okay if ointment gets in the hair, however, it makes the hair greasy.
- Clean around surgical staples located in the hair-bearing incisions with **witch hazel** on a Q-tip 4-6 times daily.
- **Shower** on the first post-operative day (once). Allow warm water, **without** soap or shampoo, to run through the hair. Some hair will be noted in the rinse at this time. Do not be concerned, hair is not falling out.
- **Shower twice** daily starting on the 2nd postoperative day. Clean the hair and scalp with **Johnson's Baby Shampoo** only. Continue the showers twice daily until all crusts are gone, usually two weeks. (Laser patients see laser instructions)
- **Elevate head** of bed 30-40 degrees for two weeks to help minimize swelling. (Use pillows, a wedge cushion or recliner.) Sleep on your back, not on your side or stomach.
- Apply facial cold compresses daily for 2 days following surgery. Dip wash cloth in ice water, wring out and apply every 20 minutes.
- Wash face with lukewarm water only.
- Wear eyeglasses if necessary.
- Wear contacts, if necessary, unless eyelid surgery was also performed - in that case, wait 10 days before wearing contacts.
- Wear a wig if desired as long as it doesn't irritate the staples or sutures.
- Wear the chin strap as much as possible or until directed by physician.

DO NOT:

- Drive for 2 weeks.
- Apply Bacitracin to the **stapled** incision line.
- Pull ear forward while cleaning behind ear.

- Use any **hairsprays or conditioners** for first 2 weeks. No hair permanents or **coloring** for 5 weeks. Do color your hair a week before the procedure if desired
- Apply make-up to the face until directed by a physician.
- Use a curling iron for 4 weeks.
- Wear earrings for 6 weeks.
- **MEN:** Do not shave for the first week.

WEEK 2

DO:

- Wash hair at salon, if desired. Blow dry on low setting only.
- Use Dove soap or Cetaphil Lotion soap to gently cleanse the skin. Do not wash with cleanser more than twice a day.
- Continue cleaning, as described above (in week 1) if crusts along incisions are still present.
- Use water based hypo-allergenic make-up if skin is smooth and free of crusts.
- **MEN:** Shave with an **electric razor** only, not directly over crusted areas.

WEEK 3

DO:

- Use a vegetable color rinse (Roux) in hair if desired.
- Restart Retin-A use at this time, if applicable.
- Use a SPF15 sunscreen over healed incisions if sun exposure is expected.
- Resume regular physical activity.

WEEK 4

DO:

- Use oil-based make-up if desired.
- Start using a curling iron. Be careful not to burn areas of the scalp that may still be numb.

WEEK 5

DO:

- Color hair and obtain a permanent if desired.

REPORT TO THE CLINIC ANY:

- Temperature elevation over 101°F.
- Sudden swelling or discoloration.
- Excessive bleeding.
- Discharge from the wound edges or other evidence of infection
- Development of any drug reaction.

REMEMBER:

- Bruising usually persists approximately 2 weeks, but in some individuals, it may take several weeks to completely subside.
- Your face will retain swelling for several months. During that time, you may notice some lumpiness, tightness, and numbness.
- As the swelling subsides so should the conditions associated with it, so be patient. Numbness typically persists for 3-6 months.
- Any slack you see in the future will result from loss of elasticity - a result of the continuation of the aging process.

- “Tucks” are designed to remove any new sags and droops in the future.
- **Arnica Montana** helps reduce bruising and **Bromelain** reduces inflammation after surgery. Both are over the counter supplements that can be found in your local drug store or on Amazon.

Your post-op appointments are on:

If you have any questions, please call the office @ 973-394-1815.