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Patient Instructions Following Face Lift Surgery

Please read and familiarize yourself with these instructions before and after surgery. By following them carefully you will assist in obtaining the best possible result from your surgery. If questions arise, do not hesitate to communicate with me and discuss your questions at any time. Take this list to the hospital with you and begin observing these directions on the day of surgery.

Before Surgery:

1. Arrange for transportation to and from the office or Surgery Center and for a responsible adult to stay with you for several hours following surgery.
2. TWO weeks before surgery discontinue all Aspirin and aspirin-like products (Aspirin, Bufferin, Anacin, Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Clinoril, Fledene, Meclomen, Naprosyn). You may take Tylenol, Datril, Panadol, or Anacin III as needed

Day of Surgery:

1. Please do not eat or drink anything after midnight except as noted below.
2. You may take your usual morning medications with a sip of water.
3. Please shower the morning of surgery; remove contact lenses and all makeup, including eyeliner and lipstick, while at home.
4. Wear comfortable clothing. You may want to bring a scarf or sunglasses with you to wear home.

After the Surgery:

1. DO NOT SMOKE FOR FOUR WEEKS. This is very important to healing.
2. Your doctor will remove your bandages on the day following your surgery. Do not disturb it; keep it dry.
3. Expect bruising and swelling for the first 24-48 hours. A small amount of bloody discharge may be evident on the dressing or around the incisions.
4. Keep your head elevated on at least two pillows for the first 72 hours following surgery. During the day, be sure to get up and walk around the house at least once every hour to keep the blood circulation and prevent pooling of blood in your legs.

5. While awake, apply cold compresses (ice packs) to both sides of your face and brow for the first 24 to 48 hours (20 minutes on/20 minutes off) following surgery. This will help to reduce swelling.
6. Your diet has no restrictions. However, you need to drink plenty of liquids, and you may find that a soft diet is most comfortable.
7. Avoid extreme physical activity. Obtain more rest than you usually get and avoid exertion, including athletic activities and intercourse. Avoid bending, lifting or straining.
8. You may wash your face and hair after the second postoperative day. Gently pat the face dry with a towel and apply the prescribed antibiotic ointment to your incisions. Please keep the incisions clean by gently using a Q-tip and lukewarm water three times daily for ten days. Apply the prescribed ointment to the suture line after each cleaning. The antibiotic ointment should be applied to keep the incisions moist and avoid crusting.
9. Note: you may experience numbness of the face and earlobes. Do not use hot rollers or sit under a hair dryer. Do not color or perm your hair for four weeks until incisions are well healed. The numbness and along the face, incision lines and possibly associated swelling will lessen over a period of six to twelve months.
10. Wear clothing that fastens in front or back for one week. Avoid slipover sweaters, turtle necks, T-shirts, etc.
11. You may adjust your neck support garment as needed for comfort. It should be snug but not uncomfortable.
12. The sun is your enemy. It can result in poor healing of your scars and contribute to a less than desired result. Absolutely avoid Sun exposure or sun lamps for six weeks after surgery. As always, wear your sunscreen. (at least SPF 15)
13. Don't be concerned if, following removal of dressing, the eyes, and upper lip show some signs of swelling and discoloration. These changes usually clear in two to three weeks. In certain patients it may require as long as 6 months for all swelling to completely subside.
14. You may resume your usual medications as prescribed by your doctor(s). Do not use aspirin or aspirin like compounds which may cause bleeding for two weeks before and two weeks after your surgery. Avoid all herbal medications for three weeks before and three weeks after surgery.
15. Your doctor has given you a pain medication to be used as directed. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or drive any vehicle after taking a narcotic. You may actually find that after the first 48 hours following your operation, Tylenol controls your discomfort well. Remember that the pain medication may make you feel drowsy and it may cause constipation.
16. You will feel tired. This is a common side effect from both the general anesthesia and the surgery. Your activity will be restricted for three weeks. You should not undertake strenuous activities like aerobics, tennis or heavy lifting. After this period, you may begin to work up to your previous level of exercise. It may be four to six weeks before you feel that your energy level has returned to normal. Pace yourself and allow for rest periods during the day.

The following should prompt a call to your doctor:

1. Sudden, dramatic swelling of the neck or deep pain in the surgical site especially on one side greater than the other. This may represent bleeding underneath your skin and can result in permanent skin loss and scarring.
2. Difficulty breathing

3. Fevers greater than 101.5 or pus-like drainage from your incision (fevers up to 101 are common and should not cause alarm).
4. Nausea/Vomiting that cannot be relieved by medications