

## **FACELIFT POST-OP INSTRUCTION SHEET**

The following post-operative instructions are specific to your procedure & are meant to serve as guidelines to help you through your recovery. Please read them carefully.

- **EMERGENCIES**

A hematoma is the most common emergent event within the first 24 hours. If one or both sides of your face begins to swell to twice its normal size, call Dr. Cooper immediately. Rest assured ~ this is not a subtle event! You will most certainly notice a change in the surgical site!

For routine matters, please call the office during business hours. If you have an emergency that cannot wait, I am available by cell phone (307) 699-3115 on evenings & weekends. Please respect my family time & call ONLY for urgent or emergent issues. Non-emergent phone calls after hours & on weekends will be subject to a \$50.00 fee. Examples of urgent or emergent issues include the following: sudden onset, extreme swelling of the surgical site, redness / warmth involving your incision(s), or unilateral calf pain or swelling. If I do not answer right away, leave a message. I will call you back! If you have a life-threatening emergency, such as crushing chest pain or shortness of breath, call 911 immediately. If you have any questions on a Thursday or Friday, please call the office to have those questions answered. Do not delay those questions & have those issues become an urgent matter over the weekend.

- **NARCOTICS AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS**

You will receive ONE prescription for pain medication. No refills on narcotics will be authorized for this procedure, so please use them wisely. Refills on all other prescriptions will not be authorized after hours or on weekends. Please plan ahead accordingly. If you are taking narcotics for any other reason prior to your procedure, please take this into consideration. Consultation with your pain management physician prior to your surgery is highly encouraged and is the responsibility of the patient.

- **ANESTHESIA**

You may experience a sore throat after surgery. This is common after general anesthesia and will resolve in a few days.

- **NAUSEA**

Nausea is very common after general anesthesia. Anti-nausea medication will be prescribed for you. A clear liquid diet is recommended until the nausea subsides, after which time you may resume a regular diet.

- **BANDAGES**

You will be placed in a head wrap for compression after surgery. You may remove this on post-operative day 3 & shower. Replace the compression garment after your shower.

Expect swelling and bruising after your surgery. It is also normal to have oozing from your incisions for the first 24-48 hours. If you notice a great deal of swelling or a constant stream of blood, apply pressure with a cold cloth and call the office.

Cold compresses can help with discomfort and swelling following your procedure. Dampen a soft cloth soaked in ice water and place it on your face. Do not apply ice directly to your face. You may use saline drops (Refresh) during the daytime if your eyes feel itchy or dry and Lacrilube ointment at bedtime.

- **PERSONAL CARE**

Rest and keep your head elevated after surgery. Avoid stooping / bending / heavy lifting for 2 weeks. You may shower facing away from the water and wash your hair on post-operative day 3. You may gently clean around your incisions with a warm, soapy washcloth and pat dry. When combing or brushing your hair, be careful of the stitches above and behind your ears. If you use a blow dryer to dry your hair, do not use high heat.

- **DIET:**

No Restrictions. Drink plenty of water. Water intake and stool softeners will help minimize constipation from narcotics (pain medication) after surgery.

- **CONSTIPATION**

Constipation is a common complaint after surgery and can be associated with anesthesia and narcotics (pain medications). Hydration and utilizing pain medication only when absolutely necessary will help minimize this. Stool softeners and laxatives (Colace, Dulcolax, Miralax) are over-the-counter medications that can help alleviate your symptoms. If these are not sufficient, please contact your primary care provider for additional recommendations.

- **ITCHING / RASHES**

Rashes are common and can be caused by a number of factors. Please let us know if you have a sensitivity to adhesives or tape prior to surgery. This will help avoid skin sensitivity involving your incisions. For itching or rashes associated with pain medications or antibiotics after surgery, an over-the-counter anti-histamine of your choice is generally sufficient (Benadryl, Claritin, Allegra, Zyrtec, Xyzal).

- **SLEEP**

Sleeping with the head elevated for the first few days after surgery will help reduce swelling.

- **STITCHES**

Your stitches will be removed in the office approximately 10-14 days after surgery.

- **DRIVING**

Wait at least 24 hours after you have stopped taking prescription pain medication to operate a vehicle.

- **EXERCISE**

You may resume light exercise (treadmill, elliptical) after 3 weeks, with gradual return to your “normal” level of activity thereafter. No heavy lifting (<10 lb) for 3 weeks. You may return to work whenever you feel you are ready.

- **SEXUAL ACTIVITY**

You may resume sexual activity once you feel you are ready. Please remember that you have recently had a major surgical procedure and utilize good judgement.

- **ALCOHOL**

You may consume alcoholic beverages once you are no longer taking prescription pain medication. However, please take into consideration all other medications you are taking and how they may interact with alcohol.

- **FEVER**

If you experience any increased warmth or redness around your incisions **OR** fever ( $>101.5$ ), please call the office.

- **TRAVEL**

No travel for 3 weeks following your procedure.

- **OTHER**

No swimming (chlorine / saltwater / other) for 3-4 weeks.

NO HEAT or ICE to surgical site. Your recently operated skin cannot sense extremes of temperatures, which can result in heat or cold burns and compromise your results. A cold cloth is acceptable and may help reduce swelling in the area.

Numbness of the face and tenderness of the ears are normal after a facelift and will resolve over the next several months. Makeup may be applied once sutures have been removed.