

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 your abdomen swells to twice its size or your drains bulbs fill immediately (within 30 minutes) after emptying, call Dr. Cooper immediately. Rest assured ~ this is not a subtle event! You will know when to call. For routine matters, please call the office during normal business hours (9AM – 5PM). If you have an emergency that cannot wait, I am available by cell phone (307) 699-3115 on evenings & weekends. Kylee is also available by cell phone at (307) 222-4194. Please respect our family time & call ONLY for urgent or emergent issues. Non-emergent phone calls or texts after hours & on weekends will be subject to a \$100.00 fee.

Examples of urgent or emergent issues include the following: sudden onset or extreme swelling of the surgical site, redness / warmth involving your incision(s), fever >101.5 or unilateral calf pain or swelling. If you have a life-threatening emergency, such as crushing chest pain or shortness of breath, call 911 immediately. Do not try to reach me first. 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**

Nausea is normal when taking multiple medications. To minimize this, avoid taking medications on an empty stomach. Try to stagger your medications 30 minutes apart. You may “halve” the pain pills or muscle relaxers if they are too strong for you. If your pain is relatively well-controlled, you may alternate your pain medication with extra-strength Tylenol. Motrin / Aleve / Ibuprofen may also be used beginning 7-10 days following your procedure.

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 & is the responsibility of the patient.

Arnica & Bromelain are recommended homeopathic supplements which facilitate resolution of bruising and swelling after surgery. These may be found online, at your local pharmacy, or at Whole Foods.

- **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 & INCISION CARE**

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.

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.

- **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.

- **SWIMMING**

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

- **TRAVEL**

No travel for 4 weeks following your procedure.

Our OR time is valuable. If you already have plans to travel, please take this into consideration prior to choosing a date for your procedure to avoid multiple rescheduling attempts with our office and the surgery center.

- **SOCIAL SUPPORT AND HOME CARE**

You **must** have someone to stay with you for 24 hours following your procedure. You will need assistance the first few times you get out of your bed or chair to prevent falls. If you live alone and need recommendations for after-hours care, please let us know and we will be happy to provide you with resources.

Pre-plan your meals and make sure you are prepared for your recovery with snacks, drinks, and extra wound care supplies. Hand sanitizer, alcohol, gloves, and extra gauze are useful to have on your bedside table for the first few days following your procedure.

- **MENTAL HEALTH**

We understand that surgery is stressful and are here to support you with any surgical-related questions during your recovery. However, you are responsible for the quality of your mental health. If you take any medications for mental wellness, please make sure those are optimized prior to your procedure to make your recovery as smooth and pleasant as possible.

