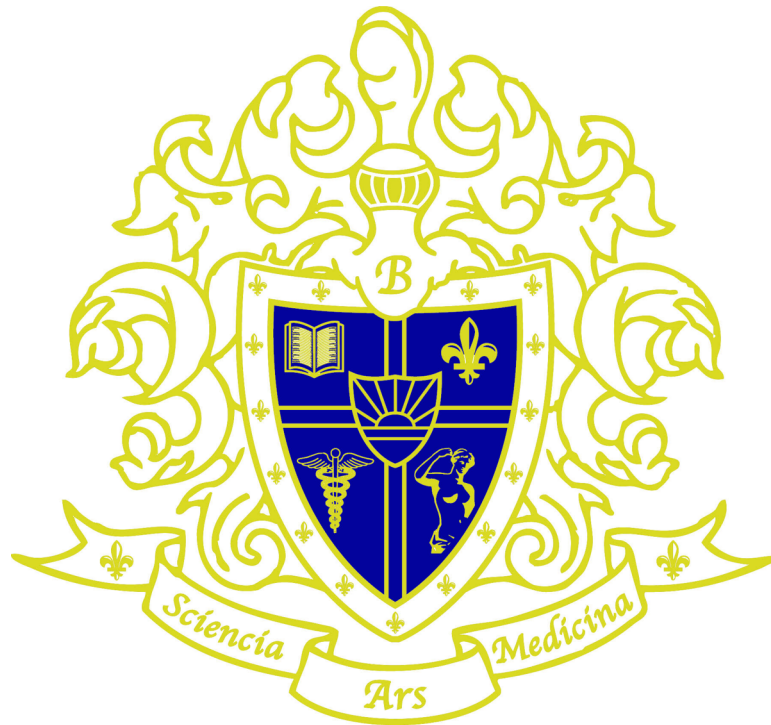


POST OPERATIVE FACE LIFT INSTRUCTIONS



Beeson Cosmetic Surgery

Introduction

The following instructions are based on experience with hundreds of blepharoplasty operations. They will answer practically every question that may arise regarding the "do's" and "don'ts" after surgery. You and your family and caregivers should read them several times so that you may become thoroughly familiar with them. Attempt to follow them faithfully: those who do so generally have the smoothest post-operative course and obtain the best results.

Swelling

Every operation, no matter how minor, is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues. The amount varies from person to person. However, it always seems more in the face, since there is looseness of the tissues and because even a small amount of swelling makes our facial features appear distorted. Sometimes the swelling becomes greater the second day after your operation. It may become more pronounced along the jaw line and is generally worse when you first arise in the morning (proof that it is better to stay up as much as possible as soon as we let you out of bed). The swelling itself is not serious and is not an indication that something is going wrong with your operation.

Discoloration

It is not unusual to have varying amounts of discoloration about the face. Like the swelling, it may become more pronounced, especially in the neck, after the first day or so, but remember this is temporary.

Turning The Head

Avoid turning the head or bending the neck. When you must turn, move the shoulders and head as one unit or as though you had a "stiff neck."

Pain

There is usually little actual pain following a face-lift, but you may experience a deep bruised sensation as a result of the swelling, and the face may seem heavy. As is usually the case with such things, this seems worse at night and when one becomes nervous.

Unfortunately, the usually prescribed painkillers often cause sensations of light-headedness, particularly in the immediate post-operative period and, consequently, seem to make recovery more tedious. Therefore, it is better to try the application of cold compresses before resorting to drugs. If this is not effective, we recommend Extra Strength Tylenol, if there is no history of sensitivity to these products. If the pain is severe, notify the nurse and stronger medication can be ordered for you.

Ice Compresses

Wash towels (not ice bag) dipped in ice water, wrung out lightly and applied across the jaws and neck continuously (changing every twenty minutes) for the first 48 hours and then several times daily during the first week can dramatically help reduce swelling, discomfort, and discoloration. They may be placed in a plastic wrapper (baggie, etc.) to avoid wetting the dressing and your clothing.

Removal of Dressings

A pressure dressing will be applied before you leave the operating room. It is to remain in place until the following morning. You should be as quiet as possible during this time. Therefore, a great deal of talking and having too many visitors are discouraged. If your dressing begins to feel excessively tight or uncomfortable, report it to us.

Elevate Head of Bed

To help minimize swelling, the head of your bed should be elevated 30-40 degrees.

Medications

During your surgery you will be given medications to help reduce your swelling, prophylactic antibiotics, and anti-nausea medications. Specific medications for pain are prescribed for you. Take these medications only if you feel they are needed.

Getting Out of Bed

We usually recommend you remain in bed during the first 12 hours following surgery, after which you may sit in a chair, walk to the bathroom, or walk around your room.

Stool

Avoid **straining** at the stool. We recommend that patients use MiraLAX or another over the counter stool softener, as long as they are not sensitive to the medication, for the first 1-2 weeks following surgery to avoid constipation. Tell the nurse if you need a stronger laxative or stool softener, and we will prescribe one for you.

After Surgery

If you live in another city, we prefer you to stay in the Indianapolis area your first night and preferably for 2-3 days after surgery.

Swelling

As previously explained, your face and neck will remain swollen with varying amounts of discoloration for several days. The main thing to remember is that such swelling eventually subsides. You can help expedite reduction of swelling by:

- 1) **Stay Up** (sitting, standing, walking around). IMPORTANT! Of course, you should rest when you tire.
- 2) **Avoid Turning The Head** or bending the neck. When you must turn, move the shoulders and head as one unit or as though you had a "stiff neck". Do this for two weeks.
- 3) **Avoid Bending Over, Straining, or Lifting** over 5 pounds for two weeks. Besides aggravating swelling, this may raise your blood pressure and start hemorrhage.
- 4) **Avoid Hitting or Bumping Your Face and Neck.** It is wise not to pick up small children, and is best if you should sleep alone for one week after your operation.
- 5) **Sleep with the Head of Your Bed Elevated** for 2 weeks after your operation. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of it. Try not to roll on your face. This tends to tear down the supporting stitches used under the skin of your face. If possible, it is best to sleep on your back for 3-4 weeks after your surgery. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45-degree angle to be more comfortable.
- 6) **Avoid Straining at the Stool.** If you need a laxative, we will prescribe one for you.
- 7) **Avoid Excessive Sunning** of the face for one month. Ordinary exposure is not harmful, but be sure to wear sunscreen with SPF of 30 or greater and avoid getting burned.

Discoloration

Sometimes the discoloration may become more obvious after you have been discharged. It usually lasts not more than two weeks, all the while decreasing in intensity. The measures previously described that help the swelling to subside will also help the discoloration. Unfortunately, there is no medication, which will cause it to disappear rapidly - only "tincture of time."

You can camouflage the discoloration to some extent by using Dermablend make-up. It may be applied with a moist sponge. After it dries, a second layer may be applied. It can be removed with water. L'Oréal Color Correction Kits can also be used. Our nurses can help you with specific make-up camouflaging techniques. Do not apply make-up over the incisions themselves for several days after the sutures have been removed. However, you can bring it up to the line of the incisions.

Pain

If you should have discomfort around the face, try the application of cold compresses before resorting to stronger drugs. If this is not effective, you may take the pain medication that we prescribed for you. Under no circumstances should ASPIRIN or medications containing aspirin or salicylates be taken without first consulting us. Be sure to check the labels of any pain medications you already have or any you purchase from the drug store. If Extra-Strength Tylenol doesn't help, then you may try the prescribed pain medication given to you at the time of your pre-surgery visit.

Hemorrhage

If hemorrhage does occur, go to bed, elevate the head, apply ice compresses about the face and neck, and report it by telephone. If the bleeding has not subsided within 20 minutes of holding pressure, report it to us immediately by phone. You will probably be told to return to the office.

Temperature

It is normal to have a slight elevation in body temperature as part of the normal healing process. Generally, this will be 100 degrees or slightly higher. Patients will often think they have an increased temperature because they feel warm, but in reality, they do not. To be sure, you should measure your temperature by mouth, and report any persistent temperature greater than 100 degrees.

Weakness

It is not unusual after a person has an anesthetic or any type of operation for them to feel weak, have palpitation, break out in "cold sweats," or get dizzy. This gradually clears up in a few days without medication.

Insomnia

When there is too much difficulty in sleeping in the post-operative period, we will prescribe a sedative. It should be remembered that such drugs also tend to make some people feel light-headed and weak and should be taken only if needed. They can also lead to more swelling and bruising and cannot be taken in conjunction with most prescribed pain medications.

Depression

Because a person is so "keyed-up" before the operation, there is usually a mental and physical let-down afterward. It is not unusual for the patient to feel depressed and tired following surgery. If this happens, it is not abnormal.

It is not unusual for an individual to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery because, no matter how much they wanted the operation beforehand and how much they were told about what to expect post-operatively; they are shocked when they see their face swollen and discolored.

Be realistic and realize that this is a very temporary condition that will subside shortly. The best "treatment" consists of busying one's self with the details of post-operative care and trying to divert one's attention to other thoughts – listen to your favorite music play list or books on tape.

Diet and Alcoholic Beverages

Immediately following surgery, you are encouraged to take a moderate amount of liquids to avoid dehydration. Following face-lift surgery, it is best to avoid foods that require vigorous chewing for several days. As always, a well-balanced diet in moderation is recommended for those interested in maintaining their best physical condition.

Alcoholic beverages are discouraged during the first three weeks after surgery. A social drink would be acceptable, but enough alcohol to make one feel "relaxed" also lowers one's sense of awareness, which is needed to avoid disturbing the area of the surgery. Alcohol can also lead to increased bruising and swelling.

Numbness

Parts of the face, neck, and ears sometimes feel weak or "numb" after the face-lift operation, but this is usually temporary.

Tightness of the Face

The skin of the face may feel tight for a while, and you may feel that it interferes with your smile. This will resolve within a few weeks.

Thinning of the Hair

There may be transient thinning of the hair in areas adjacent to the suture lines in the temple and behind the ear. This can be due to scabbing and crusting along the incision lines (important reason to be pro-active with your wound care!). It can also be the result of the hair follicles going into a transient "shock phase". This is a normal condition that can occur and resolves over time. However, it can take up to 4-6 months for the hair shafts to regrow.

If You Injure Your Face

Many individuals sustain accidental hits on the face during the early post-operative period. Usually, one need not be overly concerned, unless the blow is hard or if hemorrhage or considerable swelling ensues. Report the incident at the next office visit or by telephone if you are sufficiently concerned.

Your Medications

When discharged, continue taking all the medicine that you were taking prior to surgery, unless otherwise directed. Take these as pre directions given you until the supply is exhausted. These prescriptions need not be refilled. Continue taking the prescribed multi-vitamins and increase vitamin C post-operatively.

Resuming Activities

1) **Wearing Glasses and Contact Lens:** EYE GLASSES may be worn as soon as the bandages are removed. CONTACT LENSES may be inserted the day after surgery.

2) **Hair and Body Care:** You may wash your hair with luke warm water in a shower and comb it out with a large toothed comb the day after surgery. You may HAVE YOUR HAIR WASHED at a salon one week after your surgery, but do not use the usual type heat hair dryer. Use a hand blow dryer, on a cold setting. Be careful not to rest your neck on the rim of the washbowl in the area of the incisions. You need to use only baby shampoo and baby conditioner for 4-6 weeks after surgery. Hair coloring should also be delayed until six weeks after your surgery. However, you may have your hair colored immediately prior to your surgery

Use cotton balls to WASH THE FACE gently with a mild soap (Basis, Neutrogena) 1-2 times daily after the first week; use a gentle upward motion.

You may take a shower the first post-operative day, but NEVER on the day when you have had sutures removed.

Do not TWEEZE THE EYEBROWS for 3 weeks.

You may wear a WIG, if you wish after surgery as long as it doesn't fit directly over the stitches or clips.

3) **Household Activities:** You may be up and around the house with your usual activities, except those specifically outlined previously.

4) **Pull-Over Clothing:** You should wear clothing that fastens either in the front or the back rather than the type that must be pulled over the head for one week.

5) **Athletics:** No swimming, strenuous athletic activity or exercises that involve turning the head for 4 weeks.

6) **Keeping a “Stiff” Face and Neck:** You should not move your face and neck excessively until the skin heals to the underlying tissue.

Toward this end:

- AVOID excessive grinning and smiling.
- Don't TURN YOUR HEAD without turning your neck and shoulders as one unit. When you must turn, do so as if you had a "crick" in the neck. Do this for 2 weeks.
- Don't BEND your head forward or extend your neck backward for 2 weeks.
- AVOID gum or foods that are hard to chew. Soups, mashed potatoes, stewed chicken, hamburger steak, or any easily chewable food is permissible.
- AVOID yawning with the mouth opened widely for 2 weeks.

7) **Returning to Work and Resuming Social Activities:** When you should return to work depends on the amount of physical activity and public contact your job involves and also the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop. The average patient may return to work or go out socially 1-2 weeks after surgery, when these factors are minimal. However, everyone heals differently, so you will have to play this by ear! Do not drive for one week.

Your Scars

After all stitches have been removed, the incisions will appear a deep pink color. There will be varying amounts of swelling in and around the actual incisions themselves. With the passage of time, the pink will become white, the firmness of the incisions will soften, and they will become less noticeable. Each individual varies with respect to healing, but it takes approximately one year before we have complete healing

Daily Care

- 1) Go over your suture lines 3-4 times daily with hydrogen peroxide on a Q-tip around the front and back of your ear. Apply a small amount of Bacitracin to the suture lines around the front and back of the ear.
- 2) Apply hydrogen peroxide to the staples also, but never use Bacitracin on the staples, only hydrogen peroxide. Use the Bacitracin only on the suture lines around the ears, but never in the hair.
- 3) The first day after surgery you may shower with warm water. Starting on the second day after surgery you should use baby shampoo and shower 3-4 times a day for the first post-operative week. If you had eyelid surgery, do not be afraid to get the sutures around your eyes wet when showering. In fact, this is encouraged.
- 4) Report any excessive bleeding that persists after you have applied gently pressure to the area for 20 minutes.
- 5) Report any signs of infection such as high fever, excessive swelling, redness, or drainage.
- 6) Avoid taking medications on an empty stomach.

7) Never wash your hair the day of staple removal. However, you may wash it the following day, using baby shampoo only.

Your First Week Post Operative Office Visit

There is no reason to be anxious or worry about what will happen at your first week postoperative visit to our office. We will check the progress of your healing and remove the skin sutures. Many of the skin sutures will have already dissolved themselves. We will gently remove the remaining sutures with small delicate instruments to minimize any discomfort. If skin staples were used in your surgery, they are gently removed with a special instrument—usually half at week one and the remaining sutures at your two-week visit. If you are especially anxious, you may take a pain pill prior to arriving at the office.

Finally

Remember the things you were told before your operation namely:

1) When the bandages are first removed, the face will appear swollen and there will be varying amounts of discoloration. This swelling will subside to a great extent within 1-2 weeks. However, it will take 6-8 weeks for all the swelling to disappear and for your face to reach its final contour.

2) The discoloration will gradually disappear over a period of 10-14 days in most case. We have yet to encounter a case where it has persisted permanently!

3) Report

- Temperature elevation
- Sudden swelling or discoloration
- Hemorrhage
- Discharge from incisions or any evidence of infection
- Development of any drug reaction

Most important: BE PATIENT during the healing process!

If you have any questions or concerns, you are urged to call me.