

Facial Lift Post Op

RECOVERY TIMETABLE:

Approximate recovery after facelift is as follows:

DAY 1:

Return home. Use cool compresses or ice for 24 hours.

DAY 2-3:

Maximum bruising and swelling.

DAYS 5-7:

Stitches removed or dissolving. Bruising starting to go away.

WEEK 1:

Wear elastic garment at all times except when showering. otherwise by Dr. Smith). Repeat 2 times per day. May use cover makeup.

WEEKS 2-3:

Wear elastic garment at night only. Swelling much improved. Some areas of the face and neck will feel quite stiff. Residual bruising can be covered by make-up.

REMEMBER: If you have any concerns or questions, you should be comfortable contacting our office any time. Our office should be a source of information and reassurance throughout this entire experience, from the time of your first consultation and continuing after your surgery.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER SURGERY?

There will be a mild to moderate amount of pain and discomfort associated with the surgery. This should be easily controlled with oral medications. Tylenol with hydrocodeine or codeine (or equivalent if allergy to codeine exists) is generally always sufficient for pain control.

The discomfort and pain should begin to decrease within 72 hours after surgery and a significant increase in pain after this period should prompt you to call the office. Severe pain is rare; if you experience this, please contact us immediately.

Bruising and swelling are to be expected after the surgery. These symptoms will peak within the first 36 to 72 hours after surgery, and will gradually subside over the next 10 to 14 days. To minimize the swelling, you should sleep with your head elevated for a couple of weeks after the surgery.

It is not unusual to have some slight drainage for the first 48 hours after surgery. A bulky cotton compression dressing with drains will cover your scalp and face for 7 days after surgery. It serves to help prevent blood collections under the skin. Prior to leaving for home on the day of surgery, you (or someone looking after you) should feel comfortable emptying and resetting the drains.

During your first postoperative visit, the bulky dressing and, usually the drains, will be removed. You will then be placed in a supportive elastic face garment that is to be worn continuously, unless showering, for the first 7 to 10 days. After this time, it should be worn at night only for the next 3 weeks.

It is of utmost importance to tell Dr. Smith prior to surgery if you have ever been on Accutane, received radiation therapy to the head or neck, taken steroids or immunosuppressive agents.

Immunosuppressed patients (HIV positive, chemotherapy, AIDS etc.) and patients with certain autoimmune disorders may not be good candidates for

this procedure as the risks of poor healing and infection leading to permanent scarring and poor aesthetic results may be much higher. It is mandatory that you inform Dr. Smith if you have any of these conditions before surgery.

CALL THE OFFICE PROMPTLY IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- development of a temperature elevation exceeding 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- unusual bleeding or discharge from the incision.
- a significant progressive increase in pain which is not easily relieved by taking your prescribed medication.
- repeated or violent vomiting.

If any of the above should occur after regular office hours, call us through the answering service. For whatever reason, if you notice one of the above changes and cannot reach us at our office or through the answering service, present yourself to the emergency department for evaluation.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MYSELF AFTER SURGERY?

Make arrangements to have someone drive you to, and from, your surgery.

We highly recommend that someone stay with you for the first night after your surgery.

Try to fill your prescriptions before your surgery since it means one less thing for you to worry about afterwards.

Arrive for your surgery in loose, comfortable clothing. Your top should button or zip rather than pull over your head.

Take the antibiotics and pain medication only as prescribed by the office.

Do not take any aspirin or any anti-inflammatory compounds for 4 weeks before and 2 weeks after your surgery unless you first discuss it with your surgeon.

If you use tobacco products, you should not use these products for at least 6 weeks prior to surgery and 6 weeks after surgery. Smoking and chewing tobacco inhibit your circulation and can significantly compromise your surgical outcome. Your surgery may be canceled if you have not followed the above noted recommendations.

You should thoroughly wash your hair with an antibacterial shampoo or soap (available in drug stores) the night before surgery.

To minimize swelling, you may use cool, clean compresses or ice wrapped in a dry cloth. Apply these gently to your face four to six times a day for the first twenty four hours after surgery for 15 minutes.

Sleep with the head elevated 30 degrees for 3 weeks after surgery.

External sutures should be kept clean and dry. Dissolvable sutures will disappear on their own within 5 to 7 days. Non dissolvable sutures should usually be removed within 1 week of surgery. Surgical staples used within the hairline, will be removed gradually over several visits.

You should do no vigorous exercise and should avoid any significant physical exertion, lifting or straining for a minimum of 3 weeks after your surgery, as this activity could disrupt your wound healing. Plan on taking it easy.

You may shower or bathe on the third day after surgery. Use only tepid water. When brushing or combing your hair, use care around the incisions for the first 3 weeks. Often, having a friend or family member brush your hair is helpful. Do not rub, wash or massage your face until after you are examined and told it is all right to do so. Likewise, do not wear make-up until your surgeon says that it is all right to do so.

Contact lenses should not be worn for the first 5 to 7 days after surgery, as placing them into your eye may put some strain on your healing face.

You can expect to experience some numbness around your ear lobes, face and neck for several weeks after surgery. Tightness during mouth opening is not uncommon. Likewise, a feeling of tightness in your neck is also not unusual after surgery. This sensation is most pronounced in the first 1 to 2 days after surgery, while the bulky dressing is in place. This dressing may give rise to a slight sense of labored breathing or a mild difficulty with swallowing. While healing, turn your head from the shoulders, rather than twisting your neck.

It is not unusual during the healing phase, to note some irregularities under the skin. These small distortions will gradually subside and eventually resolve. Small bumps under the skin are present where sutures were placed to resuspend the muscles of the face and neck. The skin often feels stiff while it is healing. Although most of these things resolve over a period of several weeks, be prepared to wait at least 6 months for your facelift to completely heal inside and out.