

FACELIFT POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE NOTE: THESE INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO BE FOLLOWED AS A GENERAL GUIDELINE. DR. WARNOCK WILL DISCUSS WITH YOU THE EXACT INTRUCTIONS HE WISHES YOU TO FOLLOW AFTER YOUR INDIVIDUAL SURGERY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PROBLEMS, WORRIES, OR WANT CLARIFICATON OF INSTRUCTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL THE OFFICE (571-2020). THE OFFICE IS OPEN FROM 9:00AM TO 5:00PM MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY. FOR AFTER HOURS, WEEKENDS OR HOLIDAYS, DIAL THE OFFICE AND ASK THE ANSWERING SERVICE TO CONTACT DR. WARNOCK

A facelift is a major surgical procedure, and convalescence following this surgery is similar to other surgical procedures. This requires that the patient be relatively inactive in the first five days following a facelift to minimize swelling and bruising. It should be stressed that the patient lead a very quiet lifestyle, minimize household chores, avoid bending forward, and limiting talking and animation.

1. Fill Prescriptions. Percocet, one or two every 4-6 hours OR Lortab, one or two every 3-4 hours as needed for pain. Phenergan, one every 6 hours as needed for nausea. Duricef, one twice daily for 7 days to guard against infection.
2. Keep the head elevated at approximately a 30-degree angle for 3-4 days postoperatively to reduce swelling. (It is best to lay on your back with two pillows placed behind both shoulders and neck). It is EXTREMELY important to avoid flexion of the neck. The neck should always be placed in the neutral position or extended. For this reason it is important when one is reading to place the reading material at eye level and support the elbows wither on a table or on ones knees. This will prevent you from flexing the neck by looking downward. Similarly, when the pillows are placed to elevate the head, they should be placed behind both shoulders and neck, and the neck should never be flexed downward by the placement of the pillows. Remember that the neck should always be neutral or in an extended position and never be flexed in the early postoperative period.
3. Do not take any aspirin or aspirin-like drugs (Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, etc.) for two weeks postoperatively. These drugs cause bleeding. If needed, you may take Tylenol. If you have any questions concerning any medications, contact Dr. Warnock.
4. The patient should leave the dressings intact and will be seen in the first 1-2 days after the surgery for removal of these bandages. Do not remove any of the dressings. Call Dr. Warnock should there be any excessive drainage on any part of the bandage that concerns you.
5. Sponge bathing is permitted for the first two or three days. Showers will then be permitted after the dressings are removed. The patient should use a mild shampoo without conditioners for shampooing and shampoo every other day for several weeks after surgery.
6. The patient may have any soft diet, but excessive chewing should be avoided for one week postoperatively. Avoid salty foods, as they will increase the swelling in your face.
7. Watch for any active bleeding, extensive bruising, or abnormal swelling or pain, particularly if the face becomes much more swollen, discolored, or painful on one side versus the other. Small differences in swelling and pain are commonly seen on the two sides of the face.
8. Smoking causes wound-healing problems. It can cause significant breakdown of the incisions and also a loss of skin. It is required for your own postoperative recovery that you not smoke for two weeks following this surgery.
9. No exercising, lifting, heavy exertion, heavy housework, etc. for three weeks. Too much activity can cause excessive bleeding and/or swelling.

PLEASE NOTE: DURING THE 48 HOURS FOLLOWING SURGERY, SWELLING, CRACKLING UNDER THE SKIN AND ASYMMETRY CAN OCCUR. THESE POSTOPERATIVE CONDITIONS WILL GRADUALLY DISAPPEAR. PAIN IS USUALLY NOTED TO BE MORE INTENSE ON ONE SIDE OF THE FACE THAN THE OTHER, AND SWELLING IS NOT ALWAYS SYMMETRICAL AND MAY BE MORE ON ONE SIDE THAN ANOTHER.

IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS TO ONE MONTH

1. Do not wear earrings before three weeks have elapsed. They might cause irritation to your healing incision.
2. Three to six weeks after surgery, your scars may start to look red. Do not be alarmed at this normal process; the redness will subside as the scars mature.
3. Sauna and steam baths should be avoided for one month following surgery.
4. You may sunbathe one month following surgery, but AVOID SUNBURN! Use sunscreen on any exposed scar.

IN GENERAL

1. After stitches are removed, you may start using covering cream over any facial bruises. Full makeup can be applied two weeks after surgery.
2. Flying is not recommended until all of the sutures are removed.
3. Scars tend to fade over a period of months. Some may take six months or longer to settle. Everyone heals differently, so please be patient.
4. Take only prescribed medications. If you are on any regular medications, notify Dr. Warnock and ask if they should be continued.

ATTENTION TO THESE SIMPLE DETAILS WILL USUALLY LEAD TO A RAPID RECOVERY FOLLOWING THE PROCEDURE. LET THE OFFICE KNOW IF YOU DEVELOP ANY ABNORMAL SWELLING IN THE EARLY POSTOPERATIVE PERIOD, ESPECIALLY IF THE SWELLING IS CONFINED TO ONE SIDE OF THE FACE OR NECK. SIMILARLY, WORSENING PAIN, TEMPERATURE OR REDNESS PRESENT IN THE SKIN OF THE CHEEK OR NECK SHOULD PROMPT A CALL TO OUR OFFICE.