

Post Operative Instructions

Face & Neck Lift

The goal is to make your surgical experience and recovery as comfortable as possible. Please call us with any questions or concerns.

Please review the following recommendations for postoperative care and the other written and verbal information you have received from your doctor. You play an active and essential role in your recovery process. It is our pleasure to assist you and care for you at any time.

Medications:

You will receive pain medication (Narcotic), and an anti nausea medication (Zofran).

- IF YOU LIVE ALONE, ARRANGE FOR SOMEONE TO STAY OVERNIGHT AFTER SURGERY
- DO NOT drive or operate machinery for 24 hours after surgery
- DO NOT drink alcoholic beverages for 24 hours after surgery
- DO NOT make major decisions, sign contracts, etc. for 24 hours after surgery.

Swelling/Discoloration:

After this type of procedure, your face and neck are usually swollen and may show noticeable bruising. Most swelling usually resolves quickly over 5-7 days (more slowly if you have had prior surgery or trauma on our face), while the discoloration will diminish more gradually over 7-10 days. You may notice that one side of your face or neck will be slightly more or less swollen than the other – this is normal and is not a cause of concern.

What to Expect:

The feeling of tightness is normal. Occasionally, swelling may cause the lower lid to become separated from the eye and may lead to incomplete eyelid closure for a few days. Both of these conditions will resolve as swelling diminishes. Tearing or eye irritation, if present, will usually resolve as swelling decreases and the eyelids close.

The following are some recommendations directed at relieving discomfort and speeding the recovery process:

1. REST IN BED OR A CHAIR for the first 5 days following surgery. Be sure to keep your head elevated at a minimum of 45 degrees.
2. USE YOUR FACIAL GARMENT, to help ease any discomfort and minimize swelling. Must wear at all times for the first 2 weeks, and then we highly

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- recommend/encourage you to wear it at night (during sleep) for an additional 4 weeks.
3. AVOID HITTING OR BUMPING YOUR FACE AND NECK. It is wise not to pick up small children and you should sleep alone for one week after your operation.
 4. APPLY COLD COMPRESSES. (See “frozen pea packets”) as often as possible for the first 72 hours after surgery. At a minimum 6 times per day for 30 min at a time. Alternate between your face and neck.
 5. AVOID BENDING, STRAINING, HEAVY LIFTING for 2 weeks following surgery. In addition to aggravating swelling, these activities may elevate blood pressure and start bleeding.
 6. AVOID EXCESSIVE SMILING, CHEWING, TALKING OR YAWNING for 2 weeks.
 7. AVOID PHYSICAL EXERCISE for 4 weeks.
 8. AVOID turning your head to either side as this will pull on the stitch lines. To turn, move your head and shoulders as a unit.
 9. DO NOT SMOKE AND AVOID ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION for 6 weeks after surgery. Both of these activities can significantly slow the healing process.
 10. REPORT ANY SUDDEN SWELLING OR INCREASED DISCOLORATION to your doctor immediately.
 11. SLEEP IN AN UPRIGHT POSITION (preferably on your back) by elevating the head of the bed and using extra pillows for at least 1 week following surgery.
 12. AVOID STRAINING IN THE BATHROOM. If you need a laxative, we recommend Docusate (your pharmacist will give it to you without a prescription). Proper diet, plenty of water and walking are strongly recommended to avoid constipation.

Nausea rarely occurs following your surgery; however, if you should experience nausea, please call us immediately. Anti-nausea medication will be prescribed, and although this will provide relief for the nausea, it may cause you to feel drowsy and dizzy.

Frozen Pea Packs:

Frozen peas (from your grocer), placed in a Ziploc bag provide the simplest and most effective cold compresses to reduce swelling, discoloration and discomfort following surgery. During your waking hours, apply the pea packs alternating between your face (both sides), and your neck. Place them for 20-30 min at a time, as often as possible for the first 48 hours following surgery, You may continue to use the pea packs as much as you like for up to 7 days after surgery. This helps reduce the swelling and discoloration of your skin.

Pain:

As mentioned above, there is some, but little, if any pain associated with your surgery. You may experience a dull ach and tightness in your face and neck, but it is very unusual

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to have significant, sharp pain. If cold compresses do not provide sufficient relief from the discomfort associated with your facelift, take extra strength Tylenol according to package directions. Under no circumstances should ASPIRIN, MOTRIN, ALEVE, ETC. and/or any medications containing aspirin or salicylates be taken. If you are not sufficiently relieved of pain, try alternating doses of extra strength Tylenol and the pain medication prescribed by your doctor. If you have increasing pain or any “burning” of the eyelids or face, please inform your doctor.

Cysts:

It is not uncommon for very small, white inclusion cysts to appear near the suture line in the first few weeks to a few months following surgery. These can easily be managed in the office during a postoperative visit.

Temperature:

Generally, the body temperature does not rise much above 100 degrees following a surgical procedure. A rise in temperature is an appropriate part of the healing process. You should check your temperature by mouth three times per day. If you have a persistent fever above 101.5 degrees that is not relieved by Tylenol, call our office.

Bleeding:

If you experience oozing or bleeding along the suture line, do not rub the areas but apply gentle pressure to the area using a sterile gauze pad followed by a cold compress. Pressure and cold compresses should be effective, however, if these measures do not stop any oozing/bleeding, please inform your doctor.

Diet:

Eat light the first 24 hours, clear liquids advancing to a regular diet as tolerated the following day. If you have persistent nausea stick to a bland diet until it subsides. Avoid foods that can cause a lot of gas. This can cause abdominal distention and undue discomfort and likely nausea. Small frequent meals are best. The pain medicine may cause constipation. Drink plenty of fluids. You may take any over the counter laxative as needed.

Some suggestions to ease abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:

1. Drink a lot of water- 8 glasses a day!
2. Drink warm liquids (tea or coffee).
3. Prune juice for constipation.
4. If severely constipated use Colace (2 tabs in a.m. and p.m. taken with one glass of warm water), and fleet enemas (regular or oil retention) as a last resort.

Daily wound care:

Gentle cleansing of the suture line along the side burns, as well as the anterior and posterior ear should be done 2 times daily with diluted hydrogen peroxide on a cotton

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swab, taking care to keep the swab on the skin, avoiding contact with the eyeball or the ear canal. Cleansing will help loosen any crusting or debris that forms. After cleansing, a small amount Mupirocin 2% ointment should be applied to the suture lines. Ointment should be applied at least 3 times per day, all along the incisions. Must wear facial garment at all times for 2 weeks, and then encouraged to wear at night for an additional 4 weeks. The pressure garment is important to minimize swelling, and contour your facial soft tissues.

Resuming Activities:

1. **WEARING GLASSES AND CONTACT LENSES.** Eyeglasses may be worn 2 weeks after surgery. Contact lenses should be worn until your doctor informs you that it is safe to use your eyeglasses.
2. **PERSONAL GROOMING.** In order to improve and speed wound healing, we recommend the following:
 - You may **SHOWER AND WASH YOUR HAIR** with Neutrogena shampoo on the second day after surgery, allowing indirect flow of warm water to wash over the wounds. (Do not let the water directly strike the wound and do not immerse or soak the wound.)
 - You may use a **BLOW DRYER** on cold setting only.
 - You may have your **HAIR WASHED AT A SALON** one week after your surgery, but do not sit under a hair dryer. Use a hand-held blow dryer on cold setting.
 - **FACE MAKEUP** may be used once sutures are removed which is 5-7 days after surgery. Avoid the suture lines once the sutures are removed for another week.
3. **HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES.** On your second postoperative day, you are encouraged to be up and around the house with your usual activities except those specifically outlined previously (no bending, no heavy lifting, etc). No strenuous activity.
4. **PULLOVER CLOTHING.** For 3 weeks following surgery, you should wear clothing that fastens either in the front or back rather than the type that must be pulled over the head. This is to avoid disrupting the incisions around your ear or hairline.
5. **AVOID EXERCISE** for 4 weeks following surgery.
6. **AVOID EXPOSURE TO SUNLIGHT.** Following surgery for an entire year, prevent sun exposure to your face and neck. The use of sun block (minimum of SPF 50) and hats are recommended.
7. **RETURNING TO WORK AND RESUMING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.** When you 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 person is ready to return to work or go out socially in 5-7 days following surgery.

Please visit Dr. Dan Calva's website at www.danielcalva.com for additional information.

- After business hours or weekends – (305) 203-3938
- Dr. Dan Calva's Cell Phone – (305) 814-9582

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Scars:

During the first several days following surgery, the scars will be imperceptible. They then go through a period of slight swelling and reddening, especially at the outer corners. As this subsides, the scars become virtually invisible again. This is the normal maturity process of scars. Any unevenness of the edges of the incisions or lumpiness of the scars is usually temporary and will subside with the passage of time. It is important to protect your incision from sun at all times for a period of one year. Use both hats and sun block (SPF 50) at all times.

Your postoperative office visit:

You will be seen at our office the following day to make sure there are no immediate complications that can be taken care of. The dressings will be removed, and incisions inspected. Sutures will be removed at your second postoperative visit, generally 5-7 days AFTER YOUR SURGERY. Following suture removal, you will generally be asked to return to the office for follow-up evaluation at 4 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year after surgery to make sure everything progresses smoothly. Please arrange your schedule to accommodate these appointments, which we urge you to make immediately following surgery.

Summary:

- Do not be discouraged by swelling and discoloration. These conditions are a normal part of your procedure and will subside within 2 weeks.
- Use your facial garment at all times for 2 weeks, and then at nights for an additional 4 weeks if possible.
- Call Dr. Calva if you experience:
 - Sudden swelling noticeably different from one side of the face compared to the other or increased discoloration.
 - Increase in facial or neck pain or any “burning” of the eyelids
 - Any progressive or one-sided decrease in vision.
 - Persistent temperature above 101.5 degrees that is not relieved by Tylenol.

Your recovery and ultimate result is very important to us. Please read this handout carefully and keep it readily accessible as a reference after your surgery.

If you have ANY questions or problems not addressed in this handout, please do not hesitate to contact us at our office at (305) 203-3938 during the day, after normal business hours or on weekends. Dr. Daniel Calva’s cell phone is (305) 814-9582.