



### Post-operative Instructions for Facelift (first night)

1. **Swelling** – is present in all facelift patients and is often worse following the first post-operative day. Sit, stand, and walk as much as possible. An upright position decreases the tendency for swelling. Ice packs over the exposed areas of the face may help to decrease swelling. Sleep in a reclining chair or with the head of the bed elevated and sleep on your back. ***Leave the head dressing in place and unaltered to avoid serious complications.***
2. **Pain** – is typically controlled with the prescribed pain medication. Pain on only one side of the face can indicate a hematoma (blood clot) formation below the skin. ***Please notify Dr. Jungkeit immediately at the number below if this occurs.*** Under no circumstances should over-the-counter pain medicines (aspirin, ibuprofen, etc.) be used for at least 10 days after surgery.
3. **Stiffness** – is expected in the face and neck post-operatively. When you look from side-to-side, move your shoulders and head as one unit as though you have a very stiff neck. This minimizes the risk of damage produced to the newly placed sutures below the skin. This guideline is important to follow for at least 4 weeks.
4. **Constipation** – avoid straining to have a bowel movement as this may increase the risk for hematoma formation. A laxative will be necessary if this occurs.
5. **Discoloration** – is not unusual to have in varying amounts in the face and neck. This bruising may last 2 -4 weeks.

**\*\*\*Remember** – With any surgical procedure, there are potential complications. Do not hesitate to call Dr. Jungkeit for any questions concerning your facelift procedure or post-operative course.

### Detailed Post-operative Facelift Instructions

The following instructions are based on experience with many facelift operations. They will answer many questions that may arise after your surgery. You and your family should read them several times so that you become familiar with them. Please follow these instructions faithfully; those who do so have the smoothest post-operative course and more satisfactory results.

## SWELLING

Any surgical procedure is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues. The amount varies from person to person, but always seems more prominent in the face. Swelling may be more noticeable after the first post-operative day. It may be more pronounced along the jaw line, and is generally most noticeable in the morning after you first wake up. This swelling is normal. It is not serious, and is to be expected after your surgery.

The main thing to remember is that swelling eventually subsides. You can help decrease the swelling in the following ways:

1. Sit, stand, and walk as much as you can after you leave the surgery center. Staying in the upright position can decrease the tendency for swelling. Using ice packs within the first 24 hours on the exposed areas of the face may be beneficial in decreasing post-operative swelling.
2. When you need to look from side to side, move your shoulders and head as one unit, as though you have a stiff neck. The healing process of the tiny sutures (stitches) will be sufficient after 4 weeks for you to move your head normally again. Do not move your neck from side to side.
3. It is always a good idea not to use your back when lifting heavy objects. For at least 2 weeks after surgery, bend at your knees - not at your waist - to lift light objects that are below waist level. If an object is the least bit heavy, ask someone to lift and carry it for you.
4. For your own comfort and to aid the healing process, be especially careful not to bump your face and neck. Sleeping alone for 1 week after surgery will help insure that you rest comfortably.
5. Sleep in a reclining chair or with the head of your bed elevated for 1 week after surgery. To accomplish this, place 2 or 3 pillows **under** the head of the mattress. For the first 3 days after surgery, do **not** put a pillow under your head, but put your head flat on the mattress, with the mattress plumped up by the pillows underneath it. Sleeping on your face tends to tear down the supporting sutures used under the skin. Therefore, it is necessary to sleep on your back for 3 - 4 weeks. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45 degree angle to be more comfortable.
6. Supporting the face and chin with a facial garment aids healing and protects the face and ears from undue stress. We will provide this garment to you at the first post-operative visit. Wear the facial garment constantly for 1 week after surgery. After this, the garment should be worn at night until 30 days after your surgery. It is also beneficial to wear the garment during the day when you are alone in this 30 day period.
7. You may continue to use ice compresses for a few days after surgery in the exposed areas of your face such as you were using at the surgery center. They may help with the discoloration and swelling, as well as minor discomfort you may experience.
8. Avoid straining during bowel movements. If you need a laxative, your pharmacist can suggest an over the counter preparation.
9. Protect your face from the sun with a sunscreen for at least 1 month; it is always a good idea to wear sunscreen to keep harmful rays from intensifying the aging process.
10. Remember – report any sudden increase in swelling or severe pain to Dr. Jungkeit.

## **DISCOLORATION**

You may take the pain medication prescribed for you. Under **NO** circumstances should you take any medicines containing aspirin, ibuprofen, vitamin E, Gingko, or any medication with blood-thinning properties. Tylenol® or extra strength Tylenol® may be used **in place of a dosage of prescription pain medication** if your pain level is minimal. If the pain you are experiencing could not be managed with Tylenol®, you must wait 4 hours until taking a dosage of the prescription pain medication. This is due to the effects of the over-the-counter Tylenol® and the Tylenol® contained in the prescription pain medication on the liver.

If you have a sudden onset of pain or a feeling of tightness around the incisions, especially if it is particularly strong on one side, please call Dr. Jungkeit.

## **OOZING**

If you notice **bright red** oozing coming through the bandages, elevate your head, apply ice compresses to your face and neck and call Dr. Jungkeit for further instructions. A small amount of dark red blood seen on the bandage may occur and is normal.

## **TEMPERATURE**

Generally, your temperature will not rise very much above 100 degrees after your facelift surgery; this rise is due to the healing process and the anesthesia. It is common to feel that your temperature is increased after surgery, but this is usually not the case. To be sure, you should measure your temperature by mouth. Report any persistent temperature above 101 degrees to Dr. Jungkeit.

## **WEAKNESS**

It is not unusual after you have had an anesthetic or any type of operation to feel weak, have palpitations, or break out in a "cold sweats" or feel dizzy. This gradually clears up after a few days without medication.

## **INSOMNIA**

Dr. Jungkeit will have prescribed a sedative for you in case you have difficulty sleeping after your facelift surgery. It is important to remember that such medication may make some people feel light-headed and weak. You should only take this medication if you need it.

## **DEPRESSION**

It is not unusual for you to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery. No matter how much you may have wanted the surgery, the post-operative swelling and bruising can be disappointing. Be patient. The bruising and swelling will subside quickly, and your surgical result will be evident.

## **NUMBNESS**

Portions of the face, neck, and ears will sometimes feel weak or numb after facelift surgery. This is temporary and usually will disappear within a few weeks, although it may take months to resolve, especially around the ears.

## **TIGHTNESS OF THE FACE**

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

## **INJURIES TO YOUR FACE**

You may have some kind of accidental blow to your face during the early post-operative phase. This actually does happen to many people. You don't need to be too concerned, unless the blow is hard or if you have hemorrhaging or swelling afterwards. If you do have these symptoms, call Dr. Jungkeit. Otherwise, report the event to Dr. Jungkeit on your next visit.

## **THINNING OF THE HAIR**

You may experience some thinning of the hair in some areas by the suture lines in the temple and behind the ear. This is temporary.

## **MEDICATIONS**

As previously mentioned, a prescription for pain and one for sleep/anxiety have been prescribed for you. Take these only if you feel you need them. Take **ALL** of your antibiotics until you run out.

After your dressings are removed, you should clean the incisions with hydrogen peroxide 2-3 times per day. Afterwards, you should then apply an antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin or Neosporin) with a clean Q-tip to the incisions. Keep the incisions thoroughly covered with the ointment until instructed to discontinue.

## **INCISIONS**

After all the sutures have been removed, the incisions will be deep pink. There will be varying amount of swelling in and around the incisions themselves. With time, the pink will become white, and the firmness of the scars will soften, making them less noticeable. Everyone heals at a different rate, but it takes approximately 1 year for all the changes to occur.

## **THE POST-OPERATIVE PERIOD**

When you awake from anesthesia, you will have large, bulky dressing. This will remain in place for about 24 hours after your surgery. If your dressing begins to feel unusually tight or uncomfortable, report it to Dr. Jungkeit. You will also have a small drain in place behind each ear. The drains will be removed during the first post-operative visit the day after surgery. Minimal activity and rest is important for the first 24 hours after surgery.

At your first post-operative visit, the drains will be removed and the dressing will be changed. This new dressing will need to remain in place for 2 additional days. For instance, if your surgery is on a Monday, the drain removal and dressing change will take place on Tuesday. The dressing will remain Wednesday and may be removed on Thursday. After you remove the dressing, you may shower and gently wash your hair. Continue to clean the incisions and apply ointment until the sutures are removed at the 1 week mark. Further instructions for aftercare will be given at that time.

Most importantly, should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Dr. Jungkeit or one of his Medical Assistants.

## **RESUMING ACTIVITIES**

1. **Household activities** - You may be up and around with your usual activities except for lifting heavy objects. Light housework only may be done. Bending and stooping is not recommended for the first 2 weeks. If any activities cause an increase in pain or bleeding, discontinue immediately.
2. **Clothing** – For 1 week after surgery, wear clothing that doesn't require being pulled over the head.
3. **Athletics** – For 6 weeks after surgery, do not swim, perform any kind of strenuous activity or perform any exercises that require turning the head.
4. **Keeping a stiff face and back** – Move your face and neck as little as possible after surgery to help your skin heal faster to the underlying tissues. To help achieve this, you should do the following:
  - Avoid excessive smiling.
  - Do **NOT** bend your head forward or backward for 2 weeks.
  - Avoid gum chewing and foods that are difficult to chew. Easily chewed foods are best. Avoid meats that require prolonged chewing.
  - Avoid yawning with your mouth opened widely for at least 1 week.
  - Turn your head with your neck and shoulders as one unit for 4 weeks.
5. **Driving** – Do not drive for at least 2 weeks after surgery, because you should not be in a situation where you have to turn your head.
6. **Returning to work and resuming social activities** – When you return to work depends upon the amount of physical activity and public contact your job involves, and also the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop. Many patients return to work and go out socially 2 -3 weeks after their surgery. As soon as you are comfortable with your new appearance, let others enjoy it also.

**FINALLY ...** Remember to refer to these instructions frequently.

When your bandages are first removed, your face will be swollen and you will have some amount of discoloration. The swelling will be mostly gone within 2 weeks; however, it will take 6 - 8 weeks for all of the swelling to disappear. The discoloration will gradually disappear over a period of 10 -14 days in most cases. The discoloration will move slowly down the face and neck. Do not be alarmed if you experience bruising down into the upper chest. This is the natural gravitational path the blood will take underneath the skin during the healing process. You may cover the bruising with make-up after 1 week; you may cover the incision sites with make-up 10 days after surgery yet you must use a fresh bottle of liquid foundation. Wash your hands thoroughly or use clean make-up sponges when applying make-up to the incision sites. This process is necessary to decrease the bacteria count around the incision sites.

Report any of the following to our office:

- Temperature elevation over 101 degrees
- Sudden swelling or unusual discoloration
- Excessive bleeding
- Yellowish discharge from the wound
- Development of any drug reaction
- Increased pain or feeling of tightness

Most importantly, make every effort to have **patience** during the healing process. The results will be worth the wait.