

CHAD PURNELL M.D.

CRANIOFACIAL AND PLASTIC SURGERY

Pre-and postoperative care instructions Face lift

Before the Operation:

- Follow the instructions given to you by our scheduler regarding eating and drinking. Try as much as possible to show up early.

Hospital Stay: Facelift is typically an outpatient procedure.

After the Operation:

- Incision care:
 - Apply bacitracin ointment to the incisions 3 times a day for the first 2 weeks. weeks, you may begin regular scar treatments. You can find instructions for these [HERE](#). The majority of incisions are closed with absorbable sutures and these do not need to be removed. If there are permanent sutures, these will be removed 1 week after the operation. Mild bruising and swelling is normal and will resolve. Numbness of the face is normal as well and will improve over the course of weeks after surgery.
 - **Ice to incision:** Apply an ice pack to your eyes and cheeks for 15 minutes at a time, with 15 minute breaks in between, for the first 1-2 days. This will help with pain and swelling. If your skin is getting irritated from the cold, give yourself longer breaks.
 - **Drain care:** You will have 2 drains in place after surgery. These will usually be removed by Dr. Purnell the day after surgery. Empty the drains if needed and keep track of how much is coming out of each one.
- Pain Control: For the first 2-3 days, it is usually easier to **schedule** non-opioid pain medications rather than waiting to see if you need them.
 - **For the first 24 hours, do not take ibuprofen or naproxen (Advil or Aleve).** Tylenol is ok to take. After the first 24 hours, you can take acetaminophen every 6 hours and ibuprofen (Motrin) every 6 hours, so you will get a medication every 3 hours. If this is not relieving the pain, you may add a dose of oxycodone.
 - The vast majority of patients only require opioid medication for the first 2-3 days after facelift, or even not at all. **Opioid medications can result in you being more sleepy, eating and drinking poorly, and can cause constipation.** They should only be used if necessary.

- Other Medications: It is normal for your eyes to be quite dry after surgery. Use **artificial tears** at least 3 times a day, and as much as needed. At night, you should use an ocular ointment such as **lacri-lube**. Apply a small strip of ointment to the corner of your eyeball or in a small strip inside the lower eyelid. This will keep your eye protected overnight.
- Diet: You should eat a bland diet for the first day after surgery in case you get nauseated. After the first night you should be able to back to eating normally. You may not want to eat foods that are hard or chewy for a week or so until it hurts less to chew.
- Activity: **Sleep with your head elevated for the first 2 weeks. This will significantly decrease swelling and pain.** Do not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk for 2 weeks. Do not exercise for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, you can slowly begin to increase your activity level. Do not go back to high-energy exercise for 8 weeks.
 - o Bathing: You may shower normally with soap and water. This can be done as early as the day after the operation after your dressing has been removed. **Do not immerse the incisions in a bath or swimming for 2 weeks.**
- Follow-up appointments: Patients are typically seen the day after the operation (for drain and dressing removal) and then after 1 week, then at 2-3 weeks.

Things to let us know about:

- **Call the Office if:**
- You develop a temperature of **over 101 degrees** Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) – it is not necessary to check temperatures after surgery unless you feel like something is wrong.
- You have **increasing redness, pain, weeping fluid, or swelling** at their surgical site. Swelling is normal for the first few days after surgery, but if swelling returns we would like to know.
- If you see a sudden significant increase in bruising or swelling around the eye.
- **If you have any vision problems we want to know immediately.**
- If you have **severe pain that is not controlled by pain medication, or pain that is rapidly increasing on one side of the face.**
- If there is a large amount of blood draining from your dressings or in your drains.
- **If you have any concerns or questions**, contact us. We are used to receiving questions from parents and can help you decide if something is normal or abnormal after surgery.

Contact Information:

IF YOU ARE SEEN AT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-CHICAGO:

- Main Hospital: 312-996-7546
- Plastic Surgery office/outpatient nurse: 312-996-9313
- Appointment Scheduling: 312-996-7546
- EMERGENCIES: 911

IF YOU ARE SEEN AT THE ASHLAND MEDICAL INSTITUTE:

- Call 312-521-0367. During the day this will reach our nurse, and will reach the physician on call overnight.