



Post operative care – Face and Neck Lift

1. Try and arrange to have either a friend or family member pick you up after surgery and stay with you for the first 24 - 48 hours in order to help you get settled in around the house.
2. Everyone recovers from their anaesthetic differently. Some people feel no side effects while others are more noticeably affected, feeling tired and even sick for the first couple of days. Avoid any sudden bending movements for the initial week after surgery.
3. It may be difficult to chew normally in the initial post-operative phase due to tightness and swelling. Eat lightly with soft meals such as fruit smoothies and soups. If necessary, cut food into small bite sized pieces to facilitate chewing and digestion.
4. Salty foods can contribute to fluid retention and swelling so keep these to a minimum in the first 7 to 10 days. In order to avoid constipation, eat plenty of fresh vegetables and dried fruits. Overall, try to eat a balanced diet to ensure your body is getting all the important nutrients it needs in the immediate postoperative healing period.
5. Drink plenty of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices for the first few days after surgery.
6. Reduce caffeine and carbonated drink intake in the first few days.
7. Again it is important to note that dairy products in the first 72 hours after surgery can upset your stomach and make you feel sick and therefore it would be sensible to limit these.
8. Do wear comfortable front opening and loose clothing at night and in the day. Ideally wear garments that do not need to be pulled over your head.
9. There is likely to be some degree of soiling or staining from the surgical incision sites so it is advisable to use older bed and pillow linen.
10. Patients need to understand that the post-operative period following a facelift can be quite a daunting one. It is not so much a question of pain although the bandages can feel quite tight. This feeling is of course partly due to the bandages but also partly due to the muscle tightening that is performed at the time of the surgery.
11. As such, even after the bandages are removed, your face will still feel tight and will continue to feel so in the first few days, particularly as the swelling starts to set in. As a result of this tightening you will also feel that you cannot open or close your mouth properly (even though you can!) You will initially look in the mirror and probably be shocked that you do not see that “fresher faced” person that you were hoping for by having a facelift!
12. In fact you will probably feel you look swollen, distorted and possibly uneven. During this time many patients hate both themselves and their surgeon for having done this. This is NORMAL! It will however settle in the next week or so as you regain movement and expression.
13. You will be obviously swollen and bruised for the first few days following surgery. The bruising and swelling will start to subside after about 10 to 14 days and most of the obvious swelling will be gone within 3 to 4 weeks. A slight tinge of bruising can occasionally persist for up to 2 months but this is quite unusual and can be easily covered with make-up.

Very occasionally, a degree of residual swelling may still be present up to 3 months after surgery. Try and prepare young children (if applicable) in advance so that they do not get



frightened by any swelling, bruising or sutures. Remember to take your Arnica tablets for two weeks following surgery.

14. At night use an extra pillow. Do not put your head below the level of the heart and avoid any straining, heavy lifting or exertion.

15. It is advised that you purchase a cold compress prior to surgery or have something cold to apply to the face and neck close at hand. Apply cool compresses to the face intermittently over your face for the first 72 hours. Never apply ice packs directly on the skin. Wrap them in a clean towel or linen.

16. Facelift surgery is not usually very painful, although due to the nature of this procedure you will experience tightness and minor discomfort due to swelling. However if you experience any such pain then you may take one or two pain relieving tablets such as paracetamol as required.

17. DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN OR PRODUCTS CONTAINING ASPIRIN as these will prolong or recommence bleeding. Keep water at your bedside to swallow pills.

18. Continue to avoid smoking and ask others not to smoke in your presence also. Avoid alcohol and medications and mixtures mentioned in the DO'S & DON'T section of your information brochure. These tend to recommence or prolong bleeding.

19. Remember to recommence any regular medication that you take (e.g. blood pressure tablets) as soon as you are able to drink, unless you are specifically requested not to.

20. You may wash your hair daily or every other day with a gentle shampoo and conditioner. Try using only lukewarm or tepid water. It will probably be best to have some help with bathing in case you feel lightheaded. When drying your hair, dab dry the suture line and remember not to rub it or remove any scabs. They may be softened with a little plain, water-based moisturiser and will separate in time. A hair detangle may help get out knots and soften the hair. Be delicate with brushing and set the blow dryer to a warm rather than a hot setting.

21. All stitches used in the facelift are of the non-dissolving type and will require removal at day 8 to 10. If you have had eyelid surgery with the facelift you will need to have these stitches removed on day 3 or 4. The tissues, which may be initially soft, will become harder and lumpy over the ensuing weeks before softening again. This is as a result of the inevitable scar build up your body produces to promote healing following surgery. This can sometimes be a difficult period and much patience is called for.

22. Your face and sometimes your ears will feel quite numb for some weeks. This is a normal consequence of surgery and should recover after a few months. In the interim however you may also experience sensations of tingling, tightness and hypersensitivity in the face and neck as the nerves begin to grow back.

23. Gentle massage to the face, neck and forehead will be advised at your follow up appointment. This will help soften some of the hardening of the tissues previously described as well as stimulate nerve re-growth to the area. Please do not start local massage until the technique is demonstrated to you at follow up. It can then be reduced to day or night time only after this period for a further 12 weeks. You may apply cool compresses over this. This facilitates the reduction of swelling and offers support to your incisions whilst healing.

24. You may use make up if you wish, after 1 week.



25. It is advisable not to apply any strong hair chemicals for 4 weeks following surgery. This includes hair tinting and perming solutions and anything which contains bleach or ammonia.

26. Abstain from all exercise including swimming for 3 weeks. Heavier exercise should be delayed for 6 weeks.

27. You may drive after 3 days.

28. Avoid sunlight as much as possible for 3 months after surgery and then use high filter sun block (i.e. Factor 30).

29. You should not travel abroad until at least 2 weeks after surgery.

You should get in touch if any of the following occur:

- a) Fever greater than 100o F or 38.5o C.
- b) Fresh bleeding, other than that of a minor nature.
- c) Excessive and sudden swelling.
- d) Pain not relieved by two pain relieving tablets.
- e) Any discharge from the incision sites after 48 hours.

REMEMBER IF IN DOUBT, PLEASE ASK BY CALLING THE OFFICE 9.00am – 5.00pm
MONDAY to FRIDAY ON 0161-232-2670/ 0161-232-2680 OR OUT OF HOURS IN AN
EMERGENCY. PLEASE CALL THE HOSPITAL ON 0161-226-0112.