

POST-OPERATIVE FACELIFT INSTRUCTIONS

1. You will want to rest for the next 5 to 7 days.
2. Keep your head elevated (30 to 40 degrees) when resting for four to five days after surgery to minimize swelling. **DO NOT USE A PILLOW** behind your head, because it will put pressure on your ears. You may elevate your head on firm towels or a blanket. You may also put a firm furniture cushion under the mattress to raise the head of the mattress.
3. When you eat or drink, do not suck; and do not use a straw.
4. Drink only from a glass or a cup.
5. Stay on a full liquid diet for three to four days, then soft foods that minimize chewing for the next week.
6. Do not chew or talk as little as possible for three (3) days
7. Have someone assist you with eating if you have difficulty seeing.
8. Use artificial tears (e.g., Lacrilube® drops) in your eyes at night if you are unable to close your eyelids. Ask your surgeon before using any ointments.
9. Take only the prescribed medications or acetaminophen (Tylenol®, APAP) for pain. Note that many prescription pain relievers already contain some acetaminophen. Do not exceed 4000 mg of acetaminophen a day.
10. Do not take aspirin or products containing aspirin. Ask your surgeon before taking other over-the-counter pain medications.
11. As a rule, your surgeon will see you the day after surgery.
12. You may bathe the day after your surgery. If your surgeon has asked you to leave the bandages on, avoid getting your head dressing wet.
13. You may require a light dressing after your surgery. We will see you in the office three to five days post operatively and/or instruct you to remove it.
14. After the dressings are removed, shower and wash your hair. Use warm not hot water (much as you would wash an infant.) Use only baby shampoo. Let the water run through your hair to remove all dried blood and surgical soap. Do not let the shower beat directly on your face. Be careful not to pull on the sutures or staples while washing or combing your hair. Do not blow dry your hair.
15. We will need to see you again five to ten days postoperatively to remove the majority of sutures and staples. We will need to see you again at ten to fourteen days to remove the remaining sutures and staples.
16. Liposuction of the neck is often done in conjunction with a facelift / brow lift. If this is the case, you will need to purchase a 3” Ace bandage or a specialized surgical chin strap. You will be instructed to wear the bandage or strap after the gauze bandages are removed.
17. After the bandages are removed, most of the crust will come off over time with your daily shower and shampoo. If there are patches of thicker crust, you may use some hydrogen peroxide and a Q-tip. Gently roll saturated Q-tip across the suture line to remove dried blood. Also, apply bacitracin or double antibiotic ointment (Polysporin®) to suture lines.
18. Avoid bending over, lifting and strenuous activity for four (4) weeks. No straining, bending over, etc. – nothing to make your face “red or blue.” At four weeks you may begin walking and light exercise, gradually working up to a normal routine by six weeks.

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■ Please call us in the office at **707-566-5288** if you have any further questions or concerns. After hours, call the Kaiser Permanente advice nurse at 707-393-4044 or you may reach the surgeon on call through the hospital operator at 707-393-4000.

REMEMBER:

- Do not take aspirin or products containing aspirin
- Do not use ice packs on your face
- Do not lie on your cheeks
- Do not be alarmed if there is dried blood on your face or head bandages. This is normal
- Call your physician if your pain cannot be controlled with Tylenol or the medication given to you by your doctor.
- Postoperative depression is not uncommon after cosmetic surgery. Such depression is usually related to the immediate postoperative discomfort, anxiety over appearance (swelling and bruising), and limitation of activity and socialization. These feelings will disappear as your appearance improves and you return to your usual activities.

MAKEUP

Do not use any makeup until your surgeon tells you you may do so. Makeup in fresh suture lines will form a permanent tattoo. Purchase some cover up make-up that matches your skin color before surgery. This is very helpful when there is bruising. Having it “on hand” prevents a trip out in public with visible bruising (which you would probably decline). The make-up “on hand” gets you out and about much sooner. Your cheeks will remain puffy for two to three months after surgery in lessening degrees. A tiny bit of swelling persists in operated areas for two to three months in diminishing amounts, but it does not interfere significantly with your appearance.

EXPOSURE TO SUN

During the first three or four months after surgery, exposure to sunlight should be avoided or minimized. If you must be in the sun, apply sun block or sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher to the rest of the face. Severe sunburn could result in permanent scarring or discoloration. Should sun burning occur, your face may stay red for many, many months in a way most bothersome and unattractive. The nose is extremely vulnerable to this after surgery.

RETURNING TO WORK

Many patients can return to work a week or more after surgery. However, with a full complement of associated procedures such as blepharoplasty, brow lift, implants, lip peel, etc., most patients do not elect to return until two or three weeks after surgery. Close up work before a camera is not advised before two or three months, although we have seen people look absolutely sensational as early as a few days to a week after major surgery in our facility. This rapid recovery is however, unusual.