

University of Virginia Plastic Surgery

Post-Operative Instructions for Face and Neck Lift Surgery

The following instructions are general guidelines to promote a safe and uneventful recovery from your surgery.

Activity Limitations:

- Patients typically return to work within 7-10 days.
- Do not take Aspirin, Motrin, Aleve or Ibuprofen or other blood thinning agents until you are instructed it is safe by your plastic surgeon.
- No sports activity or heavy lifting/heavy physical activity for 2-3 weeks or longer in some instances.
- Keep your head elevated above your heart for the first 72 hours after surgery including during sleep to help minimize your swelling and bruising.
- Sleep on your back with your head elevated not lying on one side or your face until instructed otherwise.
- Apply ice packs to the operative area every hour, 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for 24-48 hours after your procedure. The ice packs should not be placed directly on your skin, instead place a moist cloth next to your skin and then place the ice pack over the cloth. Some people use frozen peas or special eye mask ice pads.
- Avoid driving until you are no longer taking pain medications.
- You should eat a soft diet for one week following your procedure and limit conversations and use of the phone during the first week.

Bathing and Incision Care:

- You may shower 48-72 hours after your surgery. Typically you will see your plastic surgeon the day that you can first shower. They will remove your outer head wrap and drains if used.
- Do not comb or brush hair until instructed by your doctor. Typically gently after 72 hours avoiding incisions.
- You may cleanse gently around your incisions within your hairline and around your ears including shampooing 48 hours after your surgery.

Pain/ Medications:

- You will feel discomfort and pain for a several days following your surgery.
- This can be controlled with pain medications prescribed by your plastic surgeon. Many people are able to control pain with simple Tylenol.
- Prescription pain medication may be constipating. To help avoid constipation increase your intake of fluids and fibers. You may use stool softeners as necessary. Any Senna derivative such as Senokot should help. (Please refer to constipation management form provided by UVA Plastic Surgery)

General Recommendations:

- Bruising and moderate swelling is likely for one to two weeks and mild swelling can be present for up to six months.
- Avoid sun exposure to the scars for six months after your surgery. If you must have sun exposure; use a hat and SPF 30 or higher during the exposure.
- Numbness around the scars and over portions of the face may last for 2-6 months.
- A small amount of reddish leakage from your incisions after surgery is common. This looks like faint bleeding but is actually blood tinged edema fluid.
- You will probably have small drains after your procedure.
- Drains are typically removed within 2-3 days.
- Drain Care:
 - 1) Clean drain holes daily and apply bacitracin ointment.
 - 2) Keep drains secured to your dressing
 - 3) Your surgeon will typically remove the drain when the fluid collection is less than 30 mL over 24 hours

Postoperative Appointment Information:

- If your first postoperative appointment was not made at the time of your preoperative appointment University of Virginia Plastic Surgery would typically like to see you back for your first postoperative visit one to two weeks after your surgery. This date will be given to you before your discharge from the recovery room. If an appointment is not made at your preoperative appointment or in the recovery room, please call the office the day after your surgery to schedule that appointment.

Notify your physician or After Hours Advice for any of the following:

- Severe pain or swelling involving the face or surrounding your eyes should be reported to our office immediately. This may indicate bleeding that requires additional treatment.
- If you develop a fever of greater than 101 degrees, increasing redness involving your face or surrounding your eyes.

•For life threatening issues or concerns dial 911.