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Recovery Instructions

FACELIFT (RHYTIDECTOMY)

This is an outpatient surgery.

Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.

Get plenty of rest; follow a balanced diet.

Decreased activity and pain medication may promote constipation, so you may want to add more fresh fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.

Prior to your surgery, pain medication will be prescribed by Dr. Wendel and sent in electronically to your pharmacy.

Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin until approved by your surgeon.

Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.

If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Activities

Walk as soon as possible, this helps reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications.

You may tire easily. Plan on taking it easy for the first week.

No strenuous activities, including sex and heavy housework, for 2 weeks.

Walking and mild stretching are okay.

No submerging incisions under any type of water including but not limited to the ocean, pools, hot tubs, and baths for 4-6 weeks.

Return to social and employment activities in about 2 weeks.

Incision Care

If a drainage tube is placed, you may shower 48 hours after removal.

You may bathe 48 hours after surgery.

You may remove surgical garment(s) to sponge bathe and/or shower.

Avoid steam baths and saunas for 6-8 weeks.

Avoid exposing scars to the sun for at least 12 months.

Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).

Keep steri-strips in place.

Keep incisions clean, dry and inspect daily for signs of infection.

Keep head elevated; sleep with head on 2 pillows or in a recliner.
Do not use hair dye or permanent hair solutions for two months.
You may use cold compresses for comfort and to help decrease the swelling.
Hair is generally shampooed on the 2nd or 3rd postoperative day.
The area of sutures must be washed gently each time.
Keep hair dryer temperature set on low or no heat, as you temporarily may not have feeling in operated areas.
You do not want to burn your skin.
You may use makeup after the sutures are removed; new facial makeup can be used to conceal bruising, but not on the incisions.
Gently remove all makeup prior to applying new makeup.

What To Expect

Maximum discomfort should occur in the first few days, improving each day thereafter.
After having surgery, it is expected you will experience some pain and discomfort even with pain medications. This is a normal part of recovery.
Bruising, swelling, numbness, and tightness of skin for 1-2 weeks.
You will be sent home wearing a facial compression sling or chin strap. This provides compression and support.
You may experience tightness in the neck and difficulty turning side to side for 4-6 weeks.
Skin may feel dry and rough for several months.
Face may look and feel strange or seem distorted from the swelling.

Appearance

Pale, bruised and puffy face for several weeks.
Wearing scarves, turtlenecks and high-collared blouses masks the swelling and discoloration.
By the third week, you will look and feel much better.
Final result is not fully realized for approximately 4-6 months.

Follow-Up Care

Sutures are usually removed from in front of the ear in 5-7 days.
Remaining sutures are usually removed in 10-14 days.
If a drainage tube was inserted, it will be removed in 1-3 days.
Instructions regarding surgical glue removal and scar gel treatment/application will be provided at your post op appointment.
Frequent follow-up visits should be planned.

When To Call

If you have increased swelling or bruising.

If swelling and redness persist after a few days.

If you have increased redness along the incision.

If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.

If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.

If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.

If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.

If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.

If you have loss of feeling or motion.

Managing Refill Prescriptions

For prescription refills, please contact our office during business hours (615) 921-2100 Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: We are unable to refill pain medication of any kind after hours or on weekends.

Messages received after hours or on weekends will be processed the next business day.

For Medical Questions, Please Call:

(615) 921-2100 Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. After hours and on weekends, the answering service will contact Dr. Wendel or the plastic surgeon on call.