

## AFTER SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACELIFT AND BROWLIFT SURGERY

### 1 General

- a The following instructions were created to guide you to a safe surgical experience and a rapid, satisfactory convalescence. It is important that you read these instructions over and over again before your surgery so you will know exactly what to do following surgery.
- b The single most important rule is “take it easy.”
- c Remember no aspirin, smoking, alcohol, herbal medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, or anti-inflammatory medications for 2 weeks.
- d Glasses can be worn after surgery, but you must be absolutely certain that the earpieces do not come in contact with any of the incisions behind the ears until they are completely healed (usually about three weeks). Earpieces rubbing on the incision lines can result in wound healing problems.
- e Remember that healing takes time. There will be swelling and bruising. You will look “bad” before your look “good.”
- f
  - i. Facelift and Browlift surgery are remarkably not associated with much discomfort following surgery.
  - ii. Recovery from surgery is a “process” and will largely depend on the amount of surgery that you had done, your motivation for success, and your dedication in precisely following these instructions.
  - iii. In most cases, you will look “OK” at one week, “good” at two weeks, “very good” at four weeks, and “great” at eight weeks.
  - iv. In summary, it usually takes 6-8 weeks to recover from this surgery.
  - v. In summary, it usually takes 2-3 weeks for the swelling and bruising to finally resolve.
  - vi. There will be differences between the two sides of the face, and this is quite common. Try to be patient as these differences tend to disappear with time.

### 2 Activity

- a During the first 24 hours following surgery it is best to remain quiet, preferably in bed. If you do get up, be sure someone is with you for assistance and stability in the event you become dizzy or lightheaded.
- b Keep your head elevated with at least 2 pillows at all times.

- i. Try arranging your pillows in a “T” formation with one pillow placed in the traditional manner and the other pillow running perpendicular down your back. This configuration helps keep your head, neck, and back in a comfortable alignment.
- c It is best to sleep as much as possible on your back for the first several days.
- d Try to rest your facial muscles for the first few days. This means limiting talking, chewing, laughing.
- e Try not to bend over. This increases the blood pressure in the tissues and can result in bleeding problems. Use slip-on shoes.
- f The day following surgery, you may sit in a chair and take several short walks around your room.
- g You may shower (below the neck) on the third day following surgery. Assume the first day following surgery is day #1; thus if your surgery was on a Monday, you would be OK to shower on Thursday.
- h You may shower and shampoo on the fourth day following surgery. Be sure to use a conditioner to eliminate tangles. Be careful drying the face and hair after the shampoo. Blot the face and hair, do not rub vigorously. Be very careful brushing the hair. Use only the minimum of effort. Be sure the bristles of the brush do not come into contact with any of the incision lines. If you feel any resistance, STOP. Do not pull on the hairbrush against any resistance. It is OK to use the hairdryer on the COOL setting only.
  - i. Note that it may take several shampoo washings to fully cleanse the hair.
- i Beginning on the fifth day following surgery, I would like you to shower and shampoo twice daily, once in the morning and once again in the evening.
- j You may resume very casual activities and drive a car on the seventh day following surgery.
- k Days 7-14. This is still time for you to relax. This time off from your normal activities will do much to prevent complications and encourage healing. Do not lift, strain, push, or pull anything over 10 pounds.
- l Most patients will be able to return to work in 2-3 weeks, depending on the amount of surgery that has been done.
- m You may not fly in a commercial airplane for 2-3 weeks, depending on the amount of surgery that has been done.
- n You may resume normal housework in 3 weeks.
- o Week 3-6: you may begin light aerobic exercise (no weight training). You may also resume sexual activities.
- p Week 6-12: you may gradually resume any and all activities, including weight training.

- a Advance your diet slowly. On the day of surgery, begin with 7-UP or Ginger Ale and soda or graham crackers. Do not progress further until you can easily tolerate these items.
- b Next progress to soft foods (jell-o, scrambled eggs, clear soups).
- c After 24 hours, if you do not have any nausea issues, you may advance your diet gradually to normal.

#### 4 Medications

- a Medications that you should obtain yourself before surgery:
  - i. Colace: a stool softener. It is available over the counter. Take a 200 mg tablet once per day. Begin this immediately and continue for at least 3 weeks.
  - ii. Miralax: a mild laxative. It is also available over the counter. Take 1 teaspoon in a full glass of water every day. Begin this immediately and continue for at least 3 weeks.
  - iii. Hydrogen Peroxide
  - iv. Polysporin Ointment
  - v. Tylenol
- b Medication that you can obtain from our office:
  - i. Anti-bruising/Swelling: Bromelain and Arnica Montana. It has been our experience that this homeopathic medication significantly reduces bruising and swelling after surgery. Instructions are on the box.
- c Medications we typically prescribe for you:
  - i. Pain pill: usually Norco 5 mg. See directions for use below under "pain control."
  - ii. Antibiotic pill: usually Keflex 750 mg. You will take one every 12 hours for 1 week. Keflex is related to Penicillin. If you are allergic to Penicillin, we will select another antibiotic for you.
  - iii. Anti-nausea suppository: usually Phenergan 25 mg. Insert per rectum every 6 hours for nausea. If you have a history of nausea or severe motion sickness, we will prescribe Zofran-ODT 8 mg tablets. You will dissolve the tablet under your tongue every 6 hours as needed for nausea.
  - iv. Sleeping pill: Ambien 5 mg. Take one each night as needed for sleep.
  - v. Anti-anxiety pill: Ativan 1 mg. Take over every 8 hours as needed.
- d Both pain pills and the antibiotic medications tend to lead to an upset stomach after surgery. If nausea is a problem for you immediately following surgery, it is best to discontinue both the pain pills and the antibiotic medication. For pain, you may take Tylenol instead [1-2 tablets every 4 hours]. As soon as the nausea passes, you may resume your prescribed pain and antibiotic pills.
- e Pain control. It is best to regulate your pain pills according to the degree of pain that you are experiencing.

- i. For MILD pain: take 1-2 Tylenol every 4 hours.
- ii. For MODERATE pain: take 1 Tylenol and 1 pain pill every 4 hours.
- iii. For SEVERE pain: take 2 pain pills every 4 hours. If you should need something stronger, do not hesitate to call our office .
- f For “spasm” like pain, or “breakthrough” pain that comes in-between doses of your pain medication, take the Ativan 1-2 mg by mouth. It is OK to take this medication along with your pain medication. It is usually very effective.

## 5 Dressings and Drains

- a On the day of surgery, you will need to empty the drains every 2 hours. If the drainage is minimal, you may change to every 4 hours.
- b Beginning on the first day following surgery, you will need to change the drains four times a day: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bedtime.
- c Beginning on the first day following surgery, you should cleanse all incision lines with full-strength hydrogen peroxide and then apply a thin layer of Polysporin ointment.
- d Beginning on the first day following surgery, you may apply iced compresses to the cheeks (facelift) and/or forehead (browlift). You may apply the compresses as often as you desire for the first few days.
  - i. Do not apply frozen peas or freezer ice packs as they are too cold and can actually damage the skin. Also, do not apply heating pads to the face or brow at any time.

## 6 Constipation Care

- a Constipation following surgery is very common due to the anesthesia and narcotic pain medications. We do not want you to become constipated, nor do we want you to strain for bowel movements. Therefore it is imperative that you immediately begin the Colace and Miralax medication and take them faithfully each day for three weeks.
- b If, despite the Colace and Miralax, you are having a problem with constipation, obtain some Mineral Oil which is available over the counter. Take 4 tablespoons every 12 hours until effective.

## 8 Be Sure To Call Our Office If You Experience Any Of The Following Symptoms Or Problems:

- a Severe pain anywhere in the surgical area that is much worse on one side than the other side.
- b Substantial swelling that is much worse on one side than the other side.
- c Any elevated temperature greater than 101 degrees.
- d Any significant bleeding from an incision line that does not respond to a full 10 minutes (by the clock) of pressure.
- e Any suspicious redness and/or warmth suggestive of an infection.
- f Persistent nausea or vomiting.

- g Increased shortness of breath or chest pain.
- h If you have tried everything and you are still constipated.
- i If your pain medicine appears to be ineffective.

9 A Final Word

- a Our goal is to provide you with the finest plastic surgery services possible. What makes our office unique is our commitment to excellence and dedication to patient care.
- b If, after reading this booklet, you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.