

**Home Instructions for Face Lift**  
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The following instructions are based on experience with many face lift operations. They will answer practically every question that may arise regarding the "do's" and "don't's" after surgery, you and your family should read them several times so that you may become thoroughly familiar with them. Attempt to follow them faithfully. Those who do so generally have the smoothest post-operative course. This, of course, favors proper healing.

**Turning the head**

Avoid turning the head or bending the neck. When you must turn, move the shoulders and head as one unit, or as though you had a "stiff neck." you should not move the face and neck excessively until the skin heals to the underlying tissues.

**Pain**

There is usually little actual pain following a face lift, but you may experience a deep, bruised sensation as a result of the swelling. And the face may seem heavy. As is usually the case with such things, this seems worse at night and when one becomes nervous. Unfortunately, the usually-prescribed painkillers often cause sensations of light-headedness, particularly in the immediate post-operative period and consequently seem to make recovery more tedious. Therefore, it is better to try the application of cold compresses before resorting to drugs. If this is not effective, we will generally prescribe Lortab, or a similar preparation if there is no history of sensitivity to these products. If you should have discomfort around the face, try the application of cold compresses before resorting to stronger drugs, if this is not effective, you may take the pain medication which we prescribed for you. Under no circumstances should aspirin or medication containing aspirin or ibuprofen be taken without first consulting us.

**Ice compresses**

Wash towels (not an ice bag) dipped in ice chips applied across the jaws and neck for twenty minutes several times daily during the first few days. This may help reduce swelling, discomfort, and discoloration. They may be placed in a plastic wrapper (baggie, etc.) to avoid wetting the dressing and your clothing.

**Removal of dressings**

A pressure dressing will be applied before you leave the operating room. It is to remain in place for about 24 hours after surgery. You should be as quiet as possible during this time, therefore, a great deal of talking and having too many visitors is discouraged, if your dressing begins to feel excessively tight or uncomfortable, report it to us.

Elevate head of bed

To help minimize swelling, the head of the bed should be elevated 30-40 degrees  
When you go home.

## **Swelling**

As previously explained, your face and neck will remain swollen with varying amounts of discoloration for several days. The main thing to remember is that such swelling eventually subsides. You can help in several ways.

1. Stay up (sitting, standing, walking around) as much as possible when you leave the surgery center. This is important! Of course, you should rest when you tire.
2. Avoid bending over or lifting heavy things for one week. Besides aggravating swelling, this may raise the blood pressure and start hemorrhage.
3. Avoid hitting or bumping your face and neck,
4. Sleep with the head of the bed elevated for one week after your operation. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of it. Try not to roll on your face; this tends to tear down the supporting stitches used under the skin of your face. Therefore, it is necessary to sleep on your back for three weeks. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45-degree angle to be more comfortable.
5. Avoid straining at the stool. If you need a laxative, we recommend milk of magnesia (your pharmacist will give it to you without a prescription).
6. Avoid excessive sunning on the face for one month; ordinary exposure is not harmful.

## **Discoloration**

It is not unusual to have varying amounts of discoloration about the face. Like the swelling, it may become more pronounced, especially in the neck, after the first day or so. Remember,, this is temporary.

The measures previously described that help the swelling to subside will also help the discoloration. However, there is no medication which will cause it to Disappear rapidly, only "tincture of time."

You can camouflage the discoloration to some extent by using a thick makeup. A water-based makeup, pancake by max factor (two shades darker than your skin color). May be applied with a moist sponge. After it dries, a second layer may be applied. It can be removed with water. Merle Norman's retouch cover cream (two shades darker than your skin color) may be used over "hard to cover" areas. This is somewhat difficult to remove. Do not apply makeup over the incisions themselves for several days after the sutures have been removed. However, you can bring it up to the line of the incisions.

## **Your medication**

Take these as per directions given to you until the supply is exhausted. These prescriptions need not be refilled,

1. Pain medications.
2. Usually an antibiotic.
3. Medication to help keep swelling to a minimum.

## **Hemorrhage**

If hemorrhage does occur, go to bed, elevate the head, apply ice compress about the face and neck, and report it by telephone. You will probably be told to return to the office.

### **Temperature**

Generally, the body temperature does not rise much above 100 degrees following the face lift. This rise is due to the healing process. Patients will often think they have an increased temperature because they feel warm, but in reality, they do not, to be sure, you should measure your temperature by mouth. Report any persistent temperature above 100 degrees. However.

## **Weakness**

It is not unusual after a person has an anesthetic or any type of operation for them to feel weak, have palpitations, break out in "cold sweats," or get dizzy. This gradually clears up in a few days without medication,

## **Insomnia**

When there is too much difficulty in sleeping in the post-operative period, we will prescribe a sedative. It should be remembered that such drugs also tend to make some people feel light-headed and weak, these should be taken only when needed.

### **Depression**

It is not unusual for an individual to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery because. No matter how much they wanted the operation beforehand or how much they were told about what to expect post-operatively, they are shocked when they see their face swollen and perhaps discolored.

Be realistic and realize that this is a very temporary condition which will subside shortly. The best "treatment" consists of busying one's self with the details of post-operative care and trying to divert one's attention to other thoughts.

### **Numbness**

Parts of the face, neck, and ears sometimes feel weak or "numb" after the face lift operation, but this is usually temporary.

## **Tightness of the face**

The skin of the face may feel tight for a while and you may feel that it interferes with your smile. This will disappear within a few weeks.

Thinning of the hair

There may be transient thinning of the hair in areas adjacent to the suture line in the temple and behind the ear.

## **Resuming Activities**

1. Wearing glasses and contact lenses. Eyeglasses may be worn as soon as the bandages are removed. Contact lenses may be inserted the day after surgery,
2. Hair and body care. You may wash your hair out with lukewarm water in a shower and comb it out with a large-toothed comb 3 days after your operation, Use cotton balls to wash the face gently with mild soap (ivory, lowila, etc.) Twice daily after the first week. Use a gentle upward motion.

You may take a shower the first post-operative day.

Do not tweeze the eyebrows for one week.

You may wear a wig regularly if you wish as long as it doesn't fit directly Over the stitches,

3. Household activities. You may be up and around the house with your Usual activities except those specifically outlined previously.
4. Pullover clothing. You should wear clothing that fastens either in the Front or the back rather than the type that must be pulled over the head For one week.
5. Returning to work and resuming social activities, when you should return to work depends on the amount of physical activity and public contact your 108 involves, and also the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop. The average patient may 00 out socially 2-3 weeks after surgery when these factors are minimal. You'll have to play this by ear,

## **Your Scars**

After all stitches have been removed. The scars will appear in a deep pink color. There will be varying amounts of swelling in and around the scars themselves. With the passage of time, the pink will become white, the firmness of the scar will soften, and they will become less noticeable. Back individual varies with respect to healing, but it takes approximately one year for these changes to occur in most scars.

## **Finally...**

Remember the things you were told before your operation - namely:

1. When the bandages are first removed, the pace will appear swollen and there will be varying amounts of discoloration. This swelling will subside to a very large extent within two weeks; however, it will take 6-8 weeks for all of the swelling to disappear and for your pace to reach its final contour.
2. The discoloration will gradually disappear over a period of 10-14 days in most cases. We have yet to encounter a case where it persisted permanently.