

## FACELIFT AFTER SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS



All of us at the Bashioum Cosmetic Surgery Center are proud of the postoperative care of our patients. We want you to have the very best surgical result possible! We are here for you. If you have any questions of any kind at any time, please call us. It is our pleasure to help you through your convalescence. It is your responsibility to follow these important instructions. They have been developed to reduce your risk of complications and they will help with the postoperative healing. Working together we will succeed in our goal for you!

What you have accomplished is no small achievement. You have not only overcome a sensitivity you had with your physical appearance but also you have overcome the fears of completing cosmetic surgery to correct this problem. You are a person of courage and you can now demand great deeds of yourself.

### **What can I do to reduce the pain?**

All patients experience some pain in their face and neck after surgery. Most patients take only plain acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Celebrex as prescribed for pain control. If you are unable to take Celebrex, acetaminophen alone may be sufficient. Begin taking acetaminophen elixir (liquid) or tablets for pain as soon as possible after surgery. If this is not sufficient to control your pain, begin taking any prescribed narcotic (Vicodin, Percocet, Darvocet, Tylenol #3) pain pills as directed. If you did not receive a prescription for narcotic pain medication and you feel you need something stronger for pain control, please contact us as directed below. Prescribed narcotic pain medications can make you sick to your stomach. Take them only after you have had something to eat. I recommend you take a dose of either acetaminophen or narcotic pain medication before you go to bed the first night or evening after surgery. Set an alarm clock to wake yourself up 4 hours after you go to bed. Take a second dose of the same pain medication then resume your rest until morning.

Ice application during the first 24 hours after surgery will also reduce pain and swelling. Apply ice bags to your face and neck for 20 minutes at a time followed by 10 minutes of rest. In other words, apply ice to your face and neck for 20 minutes of every half an hour. When applying the ice bags make sure there is a small amount of water in with the ice at all times. Your skin should feel cool to the touch. Do not use frozen gel packs. It is not necessary to apply ice while you are sleeping at night.

### **When can I take aspirin or ibuprofen after surgery?**

Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen containing products (After Surgery Medications) for seven days after your surgery. These may cause excessive bleeding that could ruin the result of your surgery.

### **When can I eat after surgery?**

Drink only liquids for the first few hours after surgery. Advance slowly to small, light meals. If you experience nausea or vomiting more than two times, please call me so I can prescribe something to reduce this. Excessive vomiting and retching can result in bleeding beneath the skin that will require more surgery.

### **Does someone need to stay with me after surgery?**

You must have an adult (older than 18 years old) take you home and remain with you continuously for 24 hours after your surgery. Although rare, emergencies do occur. You need to have an adult with you in the event you need help. You must have help to the bathroom the first few times in case you experience dizziness or lightheadedness.

### **Can I drive myself home?**

You may not drive yourself home after surgery. The pain medicines and the anesthesia drugs interfere with your good judgment and coordination.

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### **When can I drive my car?**

Do not do anything that requires mental or physical coordination for 48 hours or for as long as you are taking prescription pain pills. This includes driving a car, truck, tractor, or operating machinery, power tools or appliances. The pain medicines and the anesthesia drugs interfere with your good judgment and coordination. In addition, your head movements should be restricted for 4 to 5 days which will make it difficult to look for traffic around your car.

### **What can I do to reduce the swelling?**

Swelling is a normal part of facelift surgery. Swelling will involve the eyelids, face and neck. It can even extend onto the chest. Elevating the head of your bed for two to three days will minimize swelling. Do not sleep on pillows under your head because this flexes your neck and can cause bleeding. You may sit in a chair. Avoid activities that involve bending over or straining.

Applying ice to your face and neck will also help. When applying the ice bags make sure there is a small amount of water in with the ice at all times. Your skin should feel cool to the touch. Do not use frozen gel packs. Reducing the swelling reduces the pain after your surgery.

### **Do I have to stay in bed after my surgery?**

Gently get out of bed as soon as possible after your surgery. When you get up, sit with your legs hanging over the edge of the bed or chair for a few minutes before standing. This will help avoid problems with dizziness, light-headedness, and fainting. Have an adult assist you the bathroom the first few times. Always get out of bed to go to the bathroom. Begin to walk as much as possible as soon as you can after surgery. Do take it easy the first few days. Do not exert yourself in any strenuous activity. Avoid activities that involve bending over or straining. A balance of rest and reduced activity will speed up your recovery.

### **Are there any bandages or dressings?**

A light elastic garment is placed on the face and neck for three to five days. A neck collar to limit neck motion is placed for five days. This reduces swelling and bruising. The dressing may be removed to shower and wash your hair. While the garment and neck collar are off, do not move turn your head from side to side, tilt your head, or bend your neck forward or backward for five days. Replace the garment and the neck collar immediately after you dry off after your shower.

### **Are there any stitches to take out?**

I only use stitches that will be absorbed or wash out. I do this to eliminate the discomfort and stress of suture removal after surgery.

### **When can I shower after surgery?**

You may shower the day after surgery. Gently remove the neck collar and elastic garment before your shower. While garment and neck collar are off, do not move turn your head from side to side, tilt your head, or bend your neck forward or backward for five days. You may use the soap you used before your surgery. Gently wash your face and hair including the incision areas. Surgical skin glue was used over some of your incisions. It will wash off in two weeks. Allow your hair to air dry for five days. Replace the garment and the neck collar immediately after you dry off after your shower. Do not take a bath, hot tub or swim for two weeks.

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### **When can I wear makeup after surgery?**

Makeup can be applied as soon as you feel up to it. Gently remove the makeup being careful not to massage the skin.

### **How long must I stay in town after surgery?**

If you live further than a one-hour drive, you must stay in the area for one or two nights.

### **How long before I can travel?**

Traveling long distances or for long periods of time can be problematic after surgery. Generally, I do not recommend traveling longer than one hour for one week after surgery. When you do travel you must have help at all times with your baggage (do not lift more than five pounds for three weeks) and you must get out of your seat and walk for five minutes every hour. Remember, even small vibrations during travel can increase the amount of pain you experience. Finally, you will not have the same energy level as you did immediately before your surgery.

### **When can I drink alcohol?**

Do not consume any alcoholic drinks (including beer and wine) for 48 hours after surgery. In addition, do not have any alcoholic drinks while you are taking the prescription pain pills. The alcohol can interact with these medicines and lead to serious health problems and death. Finally, drink alcohol in moderation for three weeks. Excessive consumption can lead to a fall that could ruin the results of the surgery.

### **How long must I be off work?**

How long you are off work depends on your occupation. If you do clerical work (i.e. stockbroker, teacher, or programmer), you can return to work when you feel up to it. This usually takes about seven days. Do not go to work for three weeks if you do manual labor (i.e. entertainer, truck driver or personal trainer). Regardless of your employment, do not lift anything weighing more than five pounds for three weeks.

### **When can I have a massage?**

Body massage is very effective in relaxation. However, it cannot be done while there is bruising of the skin due to the risk of long term or permanent brown-gray staining of the skin. All therapeutic massage treatments must be discontinued until any bruising has completely resolved. Do not massage the face or neck for six weeks.

### **When can I work out after surgery?**

Generally, you can go back to working out three weeks after facelift surgery. This depends on how you feel. Do not lift anything that weighs more than five pounds for three weeks. Do not do contact sports for six weeks. Avoid movements which would stress any of the incisions. Workouts must stop if you experience discomfort in your face or neck. A balance of rest and reduced activity will speed up your recovery.

### **Can I use a heating pad?**

Do not use a heating pad on your face or neck for a full six months after your surgery. It is not possible for you to judge the temperature of the face or neck skin. This can lead to burns and terrible scarring.

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### **When can I sunbathe after surgery?**

Sun tanning damages your skin. It leads to wrinkling, discoloration, and superficial growths. It can also lead to serious skin cancer. For these reasons, I recommend you use sun block with an SPF number of 15 or greater at all times. A physical broad-spectrum sun block works best. If you are exposed to the sun, I recommend you protect your face and neck for six weeks with a hat and sun block. You must carefully protect any scars from sun exposure with sun block for six months.

### **How long will it take for the feeling to return to my face?**

It is normal for the face to be swollen, tender, and numb for the first six weeks. Some of the numbness can linger for one to two years. Intermittent very brief pains can occur during the first year. This is a sign of nerve healing. These pains will pass within a few weeks after they begin.

### **When will I see the final result of the surgery?**

Scar healing takes six months to a year. For this reason, you will not see the final result of your surgery for six months. During this time you will notice the scars will lighten in color and they will become softer to the touch.

### **How will I feel emotionally during the first few weeks after surgery?**

Surgery affects each person's emotions differently. During the first week you can expect your energy level to be noticeably reduced. This will begin to improve the second week but it will take a full six weeks for you to have the same energy level you had before surgery. Many people say they want to sleep longer or more often.

Normal hormone changes after surgery will also affect your emotions. Between 5 to 10 days most patients experience a period of doubt regarding their decision. They may feel down and sometimes cry. Remember, this is normal and will pass with time. If this depression is severe, contact us immediately so we can see you in our office.

### **When do I come back to the office for aftercare?**

Please call the office between 8:30AM and 4:30PM during the workweek to make arrangements for me to see you one week after your surgery. Please call for appointments for follow up visits at six weeks, six months, and twelve months. The reason for this extended care is because it takes six months to one year for complete healing to occur. There are no charges for any of your aftercare office visits. It would be my pleasure to see you at any time to answer any questions about your facelift or any other cosmetic surgery you read or hear about. Finally, please mention me to your family and friends when they bring up the topic of cosmetic surgery or therapeutic injections. It has been my pleasure helping you through this cosmetic surgery experience!

### **What should I do if I have questions?**

I care about you and your concerns very much. Please call me at any time you have any questions about your facelift. Call if you have any excessive swelling, bleeding, soreness, fever, chills, redness, or unusual wound drainage. It is particularly important if symptoms are present on only one side. During office hours (8:30AM to 4:30PM, Monday through Friday), call **952.449.4900** and we will answer your questions. After hours, first call me on my **mobile phone, 612.940.0048**. If there is no answer, leave a message and call my **home number, 952.473.7854**. If the concern is not urgent and is able to wait until the next business day, you may leave a message at 952.449.4900 after hours or on weekends.