FORM
CAMPUS
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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Blepharoplasty (Eyelid Lift)

The following after-care information will help make your surgery safe and uneventful. It is important that you understand it all. If you have any questions, please ask your surgeon or our team. In some cases there will be variations to these instructions, and these will be discussed with you.

COLD COMPRESSES

Before you leave the hospital, nurses will apply cold compresses to your eyes. Please continue these compresses for at least four to six hours after you get home. Cold compresses help reduce bruising. A basin of cold water with floating ice is sufficient. Dip a clean face cloth into the water, gently wring it out, and then apply it to your eyelids. Repeat this every ten to fifteen minutes. Please do not apply ice cubes directly to the skin, as this can cause frostbite. Cold compresses can be stopped the day after surgery. However, some patients choose to continue the compresses longer because of their cool, soothing effect.

HEAD ELEVATION

Head elevation reduces bruising, bleeding and swelling. Please do not swing your head down to pick something up off the floor; bend your knees instead. Also, do not do any lifting or exercise for 2 weeks. It is helpful to sleep with an extra pillow for 2 to 3 months after surgery, as this reduces "morning puffiness". You may sleep on your side any time after surgery.

EYE DROPS AND EYE OINTMENT

Lubricating eye drops (non-prescription), e.g. Refresh Tear, Tears Naturale or Isopto Tears 0.5%, soothe the eyes and reduce dryness. These drops are typically used a couple of times a day, for as long as needed. They can be used immediately after surgery and as often as needed to prevent the eyes from feeling dry.

Lubricating eye ointment (non-prescription), e.g. Refresh Lacri-Lube or Tears Naturale P.M., moistens and protects the eyes while you are asleep. The ointment is applied at bedtime directly on the eyeballs and typically causes blurriness. It is also applied directly on the eyelid incisions to help keep them clean (please see "Wound Care").

Eye drops and ointment are best put into the eyes by another person. When doing it yourself, it helps to lie down and look up directly at the opening of the applicator tube before squeezing. To keep the applicator clean, do not let it touch your eye.

PAIN PILLS

Most patients are pleasantly surprised by how limited their post-operative discomfort is. You have been prescribed Tylenol Extra Strength; Celebrex (Celecoxib), which is an anti-inflammatory; and Hydromorphone, which is a strong narcotic painkiller. The Tylenol should be taken on schedule, every 6 hours. For the first 3 days, the Celebrex is to be taken every 12 hours. The Hydromorphone is to be taken as needed, but not more often than every 6 hours. This combination of an anti-inflammatory (Celebrex) and an analgesic (Tylenol Extra Strength or a stronger pain pill) is now recognized as the most effective way of treating post-operative discomfort. Both can be stopped when the discomfort subsides.

Please note that all pain pills cause constipation. If you are prone to constipation, you should consider a stool softener such as Colace 200 mg twice a day, and a laxative such as Milk of Magnesia, 15 to 30 cc at nighttime. Drinking plenty of fluids and eating fruit also reduces constipation.

EATING AFTER SURGERY

Patients may experience nausea after a general anesthetic. It is therefore wise to drink clear fluids (apple juice, black tea, flat pop) until the stomach feels settled. Then try eating clear soup and a few crackers. A normal diet is usually possible the next day. On rare occasions, a patient may feel nausea for a few days after surgery. Gravol tablets may then be helpful.

BLEEDING, BRUISING AND SWELLING

Minor bleeding from the incision lines is normal after surgery and should subside within 24 hours. Bruising and swelling may make it difficult to see through the eyelids the morning after surgery, but this will gradually start to subside after that.

> **IMPORTANT:** If there is progressive swelling of an eyelid together with pain, bulging of the eye or loss of vision, there may be bleeding behind the eye. This is called a hematoma. It is very rare but can be very serious. It needs to be assessed urgently by your surgeon or an emergency room physician at North York General Hospital or your closest emergency department.

Bruising is the typical "black and blue" appearance of skin after any surgery. There is great variation in how much patients bruise: some bruise very little, some more. As noted in your pre-operative instructions, Aspirin, blood thinners, anti-inflammatories and vitamins can contribute to bruising and should be stopped for two weeks before surgery. These medications can be resumed the day after surgery. The bruising typically subsides within two weeks, but in some patients can last longer. As it dissolves and becomes more yellowish in colour, it may appear to be "spreading". This is normal and is no cause for alarm.

80% of the swelling is typically gone within three weeks, but the last 20% (especially morning puffiness) can persist for a few months. It is common to have more bruising and swelling on one side than the other. This will even out with time.

ARNICA FOR BRUISING

Arnica has been shown to help decrease bruising and shorten the length of time bruising is visible. A combination of oral pellets and topical gel is recommended, but if you would prefer to use only one, the pills are likely more effective.

- The pills should be started two days before your procedure and continued for 3-5 days after your procedure.
- The gel can be started as soon as massaging it in is tolerable, and can be continued until the bruising has subsided. Storing the gel in the fridge will also provide a cooling, soothing effect on the bruised area.

These instructions are general guidance. Your surgeon or provider may give you instructions specific to your care, and those take priority.

- Apply the gel around the procedure area to minimize swelling and bruising. DO NOT take off the dressing, and DO NOT apply it on the actual incision until it is completely healed.

Please DO NOT use Arnica if you are allergic to the daisy flower.

BLURRED VISION

It is not unusual after an eyelid lift to have a minor degree of blurred vision. This is partly because the eyes are drier, as they are more open. There may also be some watering of the eyes, which may take a few weeks to settle completely.

WOUND CARE

Regular showering is fine the day after surgery. Gently wash the incision twice a day with soap and water using your fingertips or a Q-Tip, then apply the Lacri-Lube ointment. Polysporin eye (ophthalmic) ointment can also be used.

Once the sutures are out, a scar cream should be massaged onto the incision lines twice a day for two to three months. If any area of drainage remains, apply Polysporin ointment rather than scar cream to that area until the drainage has stopped, then apply scar cream there as well. The scar cream we recommend is available for purchase in our office. Our office staff will be happy to help you select a scar cream and other products to support your skin care.

EARLY FEVER

A low-grade fever (up to 37.8°C) is not uncommon the day after surgery. It usually occurs after a general anesthetic and results from small collections of mucus in the lungs. It is therefore important after a general anesthetic to take frequent deep breaths and to cough deeply. Coughing clears the lungs and corrects the low-grade fever. Failure to clear the lungs adequately can, on rare occasions, lead to a lung infection.

INFECTION

Infection is very uncommon after eyelid surgery. Any sign of increasing soreness, redness or swelling needs to be checked.

MASSAGE

At your first post-operative visit, we will teach you how to massage the eyelids. This improves local circulation, helps reduce swelling of the eyelids, reduces eyelid sensitivity and smooths out the scar lines. The upper eyelids are massaged "across and down", while the lower eyelids are massaged "across and up". It also helps to close your eyes tightly and then open them wide, frequently. Massage for at least 5 minutes, twice a day, for two months.

SILICONE SHEETING

Some studies have suggested that silicone sheeting, available in most pharmacies and online, can improve the quality of the scar. To be effective, silicone sheeting needs to be on the skin day and night for at least six months. It is not recommended for routine use, as it appears to have little value when scars are healing normally. We do recommend it for wounds that show evidence of prolonged redness or abnormal scar maturation. This applies to fewer than 5% of patients.

SCAR REDNESS

All scars are initially reddish and thickened. This is part of the normal healing process, and they will eventually smooth out. It takes 6 to 9 months for scars to fully mature, becoming flat and light in colour.

TANNING

Fresh scars and areas that have been bruised should not be tanned for at least 6 months after surgery. Early tanning can cause permanent hyperpigmentation (darkening) of the scar and the surrounding areas. Normal tanning can resume after four months, but please remember that tanning causes premature skin aging and skin cancers.

MOBILITY

It is important to be up and walking the day of surgery, and prolonged periods of bed rest are discouraged. Lying in bed can increase the rare but ever-present risk of developing blood clots in the calves, which in turn can cause pulmonary emboli (blood clots in the lungs). It is good to go for short walks, and to have frequent naps if you are feeling tired. For the first two weeks, there should not be any heavy lifting or exercise that makes your heart beat fast, as more bleeding could result. After two weeks, full activities can be resumed.

DRIVING A CAR

You must not drive for at least 24 hours after a sedative or general anesthetic, or if you feel drowsy for any reason. Do not drive if you are having any pain, as the pain may cause you to jerk the steering wheel and lose control. You must also avoid driving if you are in any way restricted in your mobility or your vision, as this may compromise safe driving.

FATIGUE AND "FEELING DOWN"

While the results of plastic surgery are typically gratifying and uplifting, it is not uncommon for patients to have "down" times. Early on, there is the lingering effect of the anesthetic, along with discomfort, swelling and bruising at the surgical site. This is followed by the typically slow maturation of the scar itself. These frustrations can weigh on you and may make you question why you had the surgery in the first place. You are not alone with these thoughts, and they are entirely normal. Rest assured that the overwhelming majority of patients are very pleased with the results of their surgery, and the apprehension and "down" times are eventually replaced by feelings of satisfaction and confidence.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

Every effort is made to provide you with a surgical experience that is safe and as comfortable as possible. Any suggestions you have that might improve the experience are much appreciated. If you have any questions, concerns or problems, please call the office at 416-447-6176.

> If there is an urgent situation and we are not immediately available, please go to the emergency department at North York General Hospital or your closest emergency department.

We hope you have a speedy recovery from your surgery.