FORM
CAMPUS

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POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Facelift and Forehead 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.

WOUND CARE

You will have a head dressing placed after surgery that should stay on until your first post-operative visit. Visible incisions can be cleaned gently with soap and water daily, starting the day after surgery. A small amount of Polysporin ointment can be applied daily to these incisions. Once the sutures are out, massage a scar cream onto the incision lines twice a day for a month. If any area of drainage remains, apply Polysporin ointment, rather than the scar cream, to those areas until the drainage has stopped, then apply the scar cream there as well. The scar cream we recommend is available in our office.

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 exercises for 4 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.

COMPRESSION GARMENT

After the head dressing from a facelift has been removed, a facial compression garment is applied. The garment comes with a small diagram showing how to wear it. Note that the "seams" are on the outside to avoid irritating the skin. The logo on the garment is typically on the inside and passes over the left ear. It helps to attach the neck Velcro tab first, and then the other two Velcro tabs. Please make sure that the chin cup passes over the front of the chin and is not bunched up under the chin. You may wish to tuck some Kleenex or gauze over the incision lines to reduce staining of the garment. The garment should be worn night and day for two weeks, and then at nighttime only for another two weeks. Its important function is to reduce bruising and swelling, and to help the skin redrape. When the garment becomes soiled, any blood stain can be removed with hydrogen peroxide. It can be washed normally and placed in the tumble dry cycle, or left to hang dry. The heat from the automatic dryer is too intense and can cause the garment to lose its elasticity.

PAIN PILLS

Most patients are pleasantly surprised by how limited their postoperative discomfort is. You have been prescribed Tylenol Extra Strength, Celebrex (Celecoxib), which is an anti-inflammatory, and Hydromorphone, which is a strong narcotic pain killer. The Tylenol should be taken on schedule, every 6 hours. 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 anti-inflammatory (Celebrex) and analgesic (Tylenol Extra Strength or a stronger pain pill) is now recognized as the most effective way of treating postoperative 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 crackers. A normal diet is usually possible the next day. On rare occasions, a patient may feel nauseated for a few days after surgery. Gravol tablets may then be helpful.

COMPRESSION (TED) STOCKINGS

Some patients will be asked to wear support or "TED" compression stockings on the day of their surgery. They are a bit like panty hose and help reduce the formation of blood clots. They can be discarded once you are up and walking normally, typically a day or two after surgery.

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 will gradually start to subside after that. It is common to have more bruising and swelling on one side than the other. This will even out with time. Bruising is the typical "black and blue" appearance of tissue after any surgery. How much patients bruise varies greatly: some bruise very little, others more. As noted in your preoperative 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 no cause for alarm. 80% of the swelling is typically gone within three weeks, but the last 20% (morning puffiness) can persist for a few months.

ARNICA FOR BRUISING

Arnica has been shown to help decrease bruising and reduce the length of time bruising is visible. We recommend a combination of oral pellets and topical gel, but if you would like 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 also provides a cooling, soothing effect on the bruised area. **Do not** take off the dressing, and **do not** apply the gel on the actual incision until it has completely healed. Apply it around the procedure area to minimize swelling and bruising. **Do not** use Arnica if you are allergic to the daisy flower.

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.

WOUND INFECTION

Wound infections are fortunately uncommon. Minor leakage of clear yellowish fluid from the stitches may occur and persist until the stitches are out. This fluid is not an infection, and is managed with soap and water washes two to three times a day, followed by Polysporin ointment and a light dressing. If the drainage from the wound becomes "soupy" and smells, or is associated with increasing redness, pain and swelling, a deeper infection may be developing. Do not hesitate to phone the office if this happens. You will need to be seen, as you may need antibiotics.

WOUND MASSAGE

Once the scar cream is being applied, 10 to 14 days after surgery, gently massage the incision lines as well. After another week, this massage can become quite firm and vigorous, with deep rotary motions along the incision line and into the face itself. Firm massage helps to desensitize the scars, making them less painful, and also reduces the normal thickness and lumpiness of a scar after surgery.

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.

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, the 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 silicone sheeting for wounds showing evidence of prolonged redness or abnormal scar maturation. This applies to less than 5% of patients.

MOBILITY

As a routine, it is important to be up and walking on 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. It is good to go for short walks and to have frequent naps if you are feeling tired. Within three weeks, full exercise activities can be resumed.

DRIVING A CAR

You must not drive a car 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 your mobility or vision is restricted in any way, 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 residual effect of the anesthetic, coupled with discomfort, swelling and bruising at the surgical site. This is followed by the typically slow maturation of the scar itself. These frustrations can all weigh on you, making you question why you had the surgery in the first place. You are not alone in these thoughts, and they are entirely normal. Rest assured that well over 90% of patients are 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.