

A **facelift**, or rhytidectomy, is beneficial for combating the signs of aging in the face and neck. People who have problems with unwanted wrinkles, jowls and sagging skin often opt to have this procedure to help achieve a more youthful, natural look. Preparing for a facelift surgery might just be enough to cause as much anxiety as the actual procedure. There are many things to be done ahead of time to ensure a smooth recover and your best results.

## PLANNING FOR SURGERY

### ONE MONTH BEFORE SURGERY

- Secure any pre-surgical physicals, laboratory tests and EKGs, if required by your surgeon. Not all patients will require these tests to be performed, but if needed, don't wait to the last minute.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle including proper diet and exercise. Staying fit and healthy can only increase your chances for a quick recovery.
- Have your hair cut and colored as needed. This is a great time to make that salon appointment.

### 2 WEEKS BEFORE SURGERY

- Stop taking certain medications, including aspirin, ibuprofen and vitamin E, which can increase your risk for certain surgical complications.
- Avoid using any nicotine from this point on, including cigarettes, pipes, chew, vapes and even smoking cessation patches. Nicotine can interfere with healthy circulation through your body, which can impact your surgery and increase your complications risk.
- Add 1000mg of Vitamin C to your daily routine. This essential vitamin is critical to the healing process and will prepare your body for surgery.
- Make plans for your accommodations. Arrange for a family member or friend to drive you safely to the surgery center and home.
- Start preparing a recovery area- a designated space in your home that is comfortable and easily accessible. Gather pillows, blankets, comfortable clothes, neck pillows, entertainment, healthy snacks, water and medical supplies.
- Wear sunscreen daily to avoid sun damage- especially to your face!

## RECOVERY EXPECTATIONS

**DAY 1** After surgery, you may feel unsteady and sleepy. Day one is usually when you most need pain medication to say on top of discomfort. Take the prescribed pain medicine (Norco) or Extra Strength Tylenol as needed.

**DAY 2** Dr. Ponsky's office will schedule a follow-up visit around this time. They will remove or change your surgical dressings and evaluate your incisions and swelling. You may experience some weakness or dizziness which is normal and will clear up in a few days.

**DAY 3** Rest is recommended for this day, but you should start to feel better and want to move around some. Bruising and swelling are traditionally greater on days 2-3 after surgery. Continue to take pain medication for any discomfort.

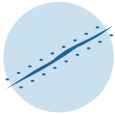
**DAYS 4-6** By this time, most patients no longer need prescription pain medication. You should start to see swelling and bruising go down. You should also start feeling more comfortable moving about. You may experience a period of mild depression. This is related to the shock of seeing your face swollen and discolored. Remember, this is just a temporary condition :)

**DAYS 7-10** During this second week, you'll likely still have some swelling and bruising around the affected areas. Sutures and staples are usually removed on day 6-7 depending on your particular procedure and healing process. Swelling and bruising can also cause some patients to experience some numbness, tingling, itching and tightness. These are all common occurrences after a facelift and should not cause concern. At the end of the second week post-surgery, many patients are feeling like themselves and ready to return to work and begin doing light activities like walking.

**DAYS 15-30** At week 3 and 4, you may still have some residual swelling and tightness, but will start looking and feeling much better. Here is where patients often begin to see real improvements in their facial contour. By this time, you can get back to exercising and enjoying activities without people noticing much- if at all. Incision sites will have a pinkish-red hue but will fade with time.



### DAILY CARE



#### Sutures

Go over your suture lines 3 times daily with peroxide on a Q-tip in front of and behind your ears. Dry these areas with a clean Q-Tip. Then apply a small amount of Bacitracin ointment with a Q-Tip to the same areas.

**Do not do the above on the stapled incisions.**



#### Icing

Iced gauze should be applied to the affected area for 20 minutes every hour for the first 48 hours. Wet the gauze with water, place in a bag and put it in the freezer. This will help with bruising and swelling.



#### Showering

You may shower 2 days after your surgery. Use the baby shampoo as instructed. Your first time washing your hair should be with the provided baby shampoo. After this, you can wash your hair with your normal shampoo and conditioner. **Do not wash your hair the day of the suture or staple removal.** Comb your hair with a large toothed comb. You may use a hair dryer to dry your hair, but it must be on a cool setting.



#### Soft Food

Eat soft foods for 1 week. Excess chewing can increase pain and swelling. Great examples of soft foods include Jell-O, pudding and mashed potatoes. To avoid an upset stomach, eat something before taking any medication. You will also be prescribed an anti-nausea medication (Zofran) that can be taken as needed.



#### Medication

Take the prescribed pain medicine (Norco) or Extra Strength Tylenol as needed. Continue taking your antibiotic (Reflex or Doxycycline) as prescribed until it is finished. You may take the prescribed sleeping pill (Restoril) as needed.



#### Sleeping

Sleep on your back with your head **elevated about 30-40 degrees** (2 pillows). You are encouraged to sleep this way for 1 week to minimize bruising and swelling.

### THINGS TO AVOID AFTER SURGERY



#### Restricted Medications

Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication. Avoid taking aspirin (Excedrin) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Aleve) for 1 week after surgery. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be taken for occasional aches and pains.



#### Movement

Avoid turning your head. If you must turn, move the head and shoulders as a unit. No strenuous exercise for 2 weeks. No contact sports for 5 weeks. Avoid sexual intercourse for 2 weeks. Excess talking, laughing and chewing can increase pain and swelling. Please limit. Avoid straining on the toilet- you will be prescribed a stool softener (Colace) that can be taken as needed.



#### Glasses

Glasses may be worn over the jaw bra and as soon as bandages are removed. Contact lenses may be inserted the day after surgery unless you have had eyelid surgery as well.



#### Resuming Activities

Do not drive while taking sedative or pain medications. Driving may resume after 10 days. Do not apply hair coloring for 4 weeks after surgery. Do not tweeze your eyebrows for 1 week. Do not use makeup for 4 days after surgery, then for another 1 week avoid makeup directly applied on healing incisions.



#### Direct Sun

Avoid direct sun to the face for 1 month. If outside, make sure to wear sunscreen, sunglasses and hat.



#### REPORT

Report any excessive bleeding that persists after applying pressure for a minimum of 20 minutes. Report any signs of infection such as excessive swelling, redness, sudden increase in pain or drainage and elevation in temperature (greater than 100.3 degrees). Report development of any drug reaction (rash, hives and/or itching).

