

Face Lift (Rhytidoplasty)

Post-Operative Instructions

- Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.
- Apply ice to the area and stay lying down, with head and back elevated (easy chair position), except for bathroom trips, for the first 48 hours. Dr. Feins will see you in the office the next day for drain removal.
- Do not use heating pads or hot water bottles on the face.
- Some bleeding is normal; put absorbent pads or towels over area.
- Take prescription pain pills as directed if needed. All strong pain medications tend to cause nausea. If the pain medication causes nausea, try taking half a pill. If half a pain pill is too strong, try Extra Strength Tylenol®
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow balanced diet.
- Decreased activity may promote constipation, so you may want to add more raw fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.
- Start taking a mild stool softener like Colace® to avoid constipation.
- **DO NOT PIERCE ANY BODY PART POST-OPERATIVELY-IT CAN CAUSE SEVERE INFECTIONS THAT IMPAIR HEALING AND SCARRING.**
- **DO NOT SMOKE, AS SMOKING DELAYS HEALING AND INCREASES THE RISK OF COMPLICATIONS.**
- **DO NOT TAKE ANY MEDICATIONS ON THE PROHIBITED MEDICATIONS LIST**
- Even when not taking pain medications, no alcohol for several months.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

First night:

- Do not remove dressings or get them wet.
- If drains were used, empty and record them as directed.
- Do not eat solid food; only take sips of clear liquids and water.

First day after:

- You may resume eating solid foods.
- Following drain removal, you may shower or bathe, and shampoo hair; let air-dry afterwards. Do not use a hair dryer.
- Make sure the water is not too hot, as your skin cannot tolerate it.
- Take care not to snag sutures with combs or brushes.

From second day after, until office visit:

- You may resume walking, treadmill.
- Limit chair sitting to 10 minutes at a time.
- Reduce use of prescription pain meds, substituting Extra- Strength Tylenol®.

- You may drive, if more than 6 hours since prescription pain med.
- Do not wear makeup yet.
- Bring a scarf and sunglasses to the office visit with you.

From office visit through third week:

You may gradually increase non-impact activity.

May use make up and have hair permed.

May remove any gauze pads; replace as needed if any drainage.

Swimming is permitted.

Air travel is permitted, but walk around on plane about every hour.

From 21 days onward:

Gradually increase activities; impact exercises are OK.

Tanning is OK, but do not get the face burned.

Activities

- You may color your hair 1 week prior to your surgery or 4 weeks after your surgery.
- Start walking as soon as possible, this helps to reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.
- Avoid lifting, bending, or straining.
- Do not drive or operate machinery until you are no longer taking any pain medications (narcotics).
- You may tire easily. Plan on taking it easy for the first week.
- No strenuous activities, including sex and heavy housework, for at least 2 weeks. (Walking and mild stretching are fine.)
- Return to work in 14-21 days.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

Incision Care

- You may shower 48 hours after removal of the drainage tubes.
- You may bathe 48 hours after surgery. Avoid steam baths and saunas for several months.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep steri-strips on; replace if they come off.
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- Keep head elevated; sleep with head on 2 pillows. **FOR HOW LONG????**
- Do not use hair dye or permanent solution until approved by Dr. Feins.
- You may use cold compresses for comfort and to help decrease the swelling.
- Hair is generally shampooed on the 2nd or 3rd postoperative day. Wash your hair with the recommended product at least every other day thereafter and before each visit to the office.
- The area of sutures must be washed gently but thoroughly each time.
- Do not set hair dryer temperature on hot, as you may not have feeling in operated areas.
- You may use makeup after the sutures are removed; new facial makeup can be used to cover up bruising, but not on the incisions. It is important to gently remove all makeup.

What To Expect

- Maximum discomfort should occur in the first few days, improving each day thereafter.
- Bruising, swelling, numbness, and tightness and tenderness of skin for 10-14 days or longer.
- You may experience tightness in the neck and difficulty turning side to side for 1-2 months.

- Skin may feel dry and rough for several months.
- Face may look and feel strange and be distorted from the swelling.
- Men have a need to shave behind their ears, where beard-growing skin is repositioned.
- It is normal to have some areas feel lumpy.
- It is normal to have some drainage from the incision.
- Bruises and some swelling will last for 2 to 5 weeks.
- Some numbness and swelling will be present for several months.
- It is normal to notice some lumpiness and irregular contours.
- Small sharp mild pains are normal for the first year.

Appearance

- Pale, bruised and puffy face for several weeks.
- Wearing scarves, turtlenecks and high-collared blouses masks the swelling and discoloration.
- By the third week, you will look and feel much better.
- Final result is not fully realized for approximately 6 months.

Follow-Up Care

- 1st post operative appointment = 1 day following surgery to remove drains and change dressing.
Take at least an Extra- strength Tylenol® before post-op visit.
- 2nd post operative appointment = within 5 days following 1st appointment.
- 3rd post operative appointment = within 10-12 days following 2nd post operative appointment.
- Sutures are usually removed from in front of the ear in 3-5 days.
- Remaining sutures and metal clips, if used, are usually removed in 1-2 weeks.
- If a drainage tube was inserted, it will be removed in 1-2 days.

When To Call

- If you have increased swelling, bruising or pain, especially on only one side
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.

**DR. FEINS CAN BE REACHED ANYTIME BY CALLING
HIS OFFICE AT 603.647.4430**