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Facelift & Necklift - Post Operative Instructions

At home after surgery: Dr. Hoefflin recommends resting quietly for the first 48 hours after surgery. You should walk or ambulate (with assistance) around your home every couple of hours. Ambulating is one of the best ways of maintaining lower extremity blood flow and preventing deep venous blood clots (DVTs).

Positioning: When resting, keep your head and back elevated on several pillows (30-40 degrees) for 2-3 days after surgery, as this will minimize any bruising or swelling. In addition, flex your thighs by placing several pillows behind your knees. Avoid bending, lifting, or straining for one week after surgery. Avoid turning your head or bending your neck. When turning, move your shoulders and head as one unit, as this will minimize tension on your suture line.

Ice compresses: Apply ice compresses to your face for the first 3 days following surgery to minimize your postoperative swelling and bruising. Small frozen bags of peas or corn are ideal because of their flexibility in being “molded” to fit your face.

Diet: Start with a light diet, preferably liquids or soups, and then progress to a regular diet after 24 hours. This will minimize any post-operative nausea. You should start taking a stool softener the day after your surgery. Avoid salt as it can promote swelling.

Oral Antibiotics: Dr. Hoefflin will prescribe you either Keflex (Cephalexin) 500 mg or Cleocin (Clindamycin) 300 mg (if allergic to penicillin or cephalosporins). Keflex should be taken 1 tablet, four times per day; Cleocin should be taken 1 tablet, three times per day. All antibiotics should be taken with food.

Discomfort: Any discomfort or soreness can be minimized with pain medication. Start with ½ a tablet of a pain pill initially, of which may be followed every 3 – 4 hours by another. It is best to take pain medication with food. Keep in mind that the pain medication can cause constipation. A helpful adjunct is to replace every other dose of pain medication with a tablet of Tylenol (650 mg) to help minimize inflammation. Avoid driving or consuming alcohol while taking prescription pain medicine.

Drains: Small drains may be placed under your skin (in the neck) to remove any accumulating fluid after surgery. Our staff will instruct you on the day of surgery on how to perform these functions. The bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be kept compressed at all times. Please remove the fluid and record the output from the bulb three

times per day. Bring this record with you to each office appointment. Drains are typically removed one to two days after your surgery.

Pressure dressings: Your face and neck pressure dressings will be removed on the second day after your surgery. Notify Dr. Hoefflin if these are excessively tight or uncomfortable.

Shampoo/Drying/Hair Coloring: After your dressings and drains have been removed, you may wash your hair with baby shampoo. It may take several washings before the crust is removed from your hair. You may wash your face with a gentle cleanser (Cetaphil) at this time. Moisturizers may be applied to your face, but avoid the incision line. You may blow dry your hair on a cool setting. Avoid hair coloring for three weeks after your surgery until the incisions have completely healed. Avoid submerging your incisions in a bath, swimming pool, or whirlpool for two weeks after surgery.

Wound Care: After your dressings and drains have been removed, gently clean your suture lines (in front and behind the ear and under the chin) with dilute soaked hydrogen peroxide Q-tips twice daily. Follow this by applying a thin layer of **Dr. Hoefflin's Gold Crust** formula, 2-3 times per day, for one week. This will prevent crusting from forming. On days 7-10, apply **Dr. Hoefflin's Silver** formula to all incision lines.

Cosmetics: Cosmetics can be applied 10 days after surgery. However, eyelid cosmetics should not be worn for 7 days after all eyelid sutures have been removed.

Swelling: Maximal swelling typically occurs two to three days after surgery, then begins to dramatically improve. Mild bruising typically resolves within 7-10 days after surgery. Mild or subtle inflammation may take up to several weeks to completely resolve. **Arnica Montana** (can be purchased at our office), taken both before and after surgery, can assist in decreasing any postoperative swelling or bruising.

Activity: It is important to refrain from any strenuous activities for the first 2 weeks after surgery. **After 2 weeks**, you may engage in light activity (i.e. light walking). **By 4 weeks**, stretching, yoga, or light-weight exercises can be resumed. Heavy weights and all pre-surgery activity may be resumed **after 6 weeks**. You may resume driving generally one week after surgery, provided you can respond and stop in emergency situations.

Sutures: The sutures placed in front of your ear and under your chin are typically removed 5-7 days after surgery. The sutures placed behind your ear are typically removed 7-10 days after surgery.

Sensation: It is normal to have spotty areas of skin numbness and/or itching along the face, neck, and ear following surgery. This gradually subsides after 2-3 months as your body progresses through the healing process.

Follow-up appointment: Your first postoperative appointment to see Dr. Hoefflin typically occurs 24 hours after surgery. This should be scheduled prior to your surgery.

Massaging exercises: Massaging exercises are initiated one week after surgery, which assists in reducing residual post-operative inflammation, as well as reducing the

appearance of your incisional scars. Dr. Hoefflin will provide you with information on such exercises during your post-operative appointment.

Minimizing long-term scar visibility: Avoid direct sunlight exposure to your healing scars for the first year following surgery. Wear a wide brim hat. Select a sunscreen with zinc oxide and SPF of 30 or greater for maximal protection. Scars typically fade in months to a year after your surgery. You may start applying a scar cream (available at our office) to minimizing your scar appearance, starting at week 3. The scar cream should be used for 6 months after surgery.

Garments: Avoid wearing pullover clothing or hairpieces for 3 weeks after surgery as these can cause disruption of your earlobe or hairline sutures.

Smoking: Do not smoke. This is important. Smoking delays healing and can increase your risk of complications.

Concerns:

Dr. Hoefflin can be reached 24 hours a day for any concerns. He can be contacted directly through his office or answering exchange at (310) 858-9105.

Please notify Dr. Hoefflin if:

- If you experience increased bleeding from your incision sites, which does not stop after several minutes of gentle pressure;
- If you develop acute onset of swelling on one side or your face or neck, which is more pronounced than the other side;
- If your drainage output significant increases from previous levels;
- If you experience a significant increase in pain which is not relieved by medication;
- If you develop a temperature above 101.5° F, or if you develop redness (like a sunburn) around your incisions;
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drains from the incisions or notice a foul odor;
- If you have any side effects to medications, such as rash, nausea, headache, or vomiting.

The quality of your facelift or necklift procedure may be compromised if you fail to return for any scheduled post-op visits, or follow Dr. Hoefflin's pre- and post- operative instructions.