

FACELIFT AFTERCARE

Today you have had a facelift or rhytidectomy.

Even though the treatments differ slightly, we have combined this aftercare sheet to simplify your home care.

After discharge from this centre, you should go home and rest. You must be accompanied home by a responsible adult, and must have someone with you for the remainder of the day and overnight.

Even if you feel normal, your reaction time will be slower after receiving sedation drugs.

It is normal to feel slightly sleepy or dizzy during the first 24 hours, so:

- Do not drive a car or catch public transport
- Do not drink alcohol
- Do not operate hazardous machinery
- Do not travel alone
- Do not make important decisions or sign important documents

Do not engage in strenuous activities, including heavy lifting or sport for six weeks following your surgery

WHAT TO EXPECT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE OPERATION:

You will have had incisions in front of and behind your ears, going up towards your temples, and extending behind your ears into the hairline. Your surgeon would have explained the technique with you before the surgery, so you should be familiar with the procedure, and have an understanding of the areas that have been affected.

After the procedure, your face will be enclosed in a chin support garment, with extra pads on and around your ears, which will apply pressure to prevent any bleeding, and also to absorb any fluids. This support will remain on for the first 24 hours. We will see you the next day in order to remove the bandages, and check the healing.

You will be given ice packs whilst in recovery, and painkillers if required. We also commence giving Arnica, which will aid the healing process. You would have been advised to bring it in with you. Occasionally patients experience a little nausea, and medication is given if that occurs. You will be nursed with your head in an elevated position, which will also help drainage, and prevent bleeding. Tightness and throbbing of the areas is normal, and should be relieved by painkillers. You will be monitored in recovery for up to six hours, and then discharged depending on your progress. You must be collected by a responsible person, and taken home where you will have someone to care for you. Many people underestimate this procedure, but it is important to realize that it is a major one, requiring weeks to recover.

WHAT TO DO AT HOME AFTER SURGERY:

Before the surgery, you would have been told to have extra pillows, ice packs, (frozen peas are more comfortable, and you can have lots of packs made up in different sizes in the freezer), soft food, drinking straws etc.

Sleeping on your back will be the only comfortable position for at least two weeks following surgery (your ears are too painful to lie on), and a soft pillow under the knees makes sleeping on your back more comfortable. (If you have heart problems, the pillow is not a good idea, as you could develop blood clots.)

Limit your facial movements, which include talking chewing etc. Speaking on the phone is virtually impossible, as your ears are not only bandaged which makes hearing difficult, but any pressure on them is painful. Drink plenty of fluids (with a straw), eat soft food, and take your antibiotics, Arnica and painkillers.

SWELLING and BRUISING:

The area will be swollen and bruised for 7-10 days, gradually subsiding, so that within a fortnight to a month, you will be completely back to your new self. To help reduce the swelling and bruising apply ice packs to the worst. (Frozen peas made up into little bags are good, as they are not heavy and mould to the area.) This is most important in the first 12 to 24 hours and can be continued for 3 to 4 days post operatively.

BLEEDING

Is usually rare, but can be increased with sudden head movements e.g. excessive laughing, bending down to ground sneezing and coughing. Try to avoid these activities for a few days and rest. If there are any signs of excessive bleeding please call the surgery or your local Doctor.

INFECTION:

There is always the risk with any surgery, but this is very rare today. Antibiotics are given as a precaution.

SYMMETRY:

Many people are asymmetrical before surgery. One side of the face may swell more than the other. Do not be too worried but wait until the swelling and bruising has totally subsided. After one to two weeks usually, your appearance is socially acceptable but wait three to four weeks for total swelling to subside.

VISION IMPAIRMENT:

If vision feels impaired, it is only due to swelling and bruising and will return to normal in a few days. The eyes are not touched during surgery, only the skin and fatty tissue around the eye. If you have had blepharoplasty as well, avoid wearing eye make-up for two weeks.

FOLLOW UP

THE NEXT DAY

We will see you at the medical centre to remove your dressings and check up on the healing. If everything is ok, you will be able to go home, and shower and wash your hair. (Very gently, and taking great care not too rub the areas.)

DAY 3

We will review you, and remove any sutures that are external. The majority of the sutures are internal, and those that are dissolvable, due so themselves. Occasionally you will have clips, which will be removed when we advise you.

You may not have any sutures that need removing – every case is different. You will continue to take your medication and Arnica.

DAY 7 AND FIVE WEEKS LATER

We will review you again, to check your progress and to take postoperative photographs.

IN CONCLUSION

As you will have gathered, this procedure is a major one, and recovery is slow and can be quite painful. Feelings of tension, pulling, numbness, throbbing, sharp or shooting pain are all normal. Obviously any persistent throbbing pain, accompanied by discharge or elevated temperature is to be brought to our attention immediately. Our staff are available for any questions you may have, and for reassurance throughout the postoperative period, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you have any problems and are unable to contact your surgeon, contact your general practitioner.

We hope this information will help, and that you have a speedy recovery.

Should you have any problems or queries whatsoever call us at the Aesthetic Surgery Centre on 8347 4488.

If for some reason, you are unable to contact us, then please call your General Practitioner.