

General Instructions for Facelift and Eyelid Surgery

1. Stop smoking/vaping/using nicotine products at least 6 weeks prior to surgery and for at least 4 weeks after. Cigarette smoke decreases the oxygen delivery to tissues trying to heal after surgery, and nicotine decreases blood flow to fragile tissues. This can harm the healing process and cause significant complications. Talk to Dr. Owens about your smoking/vaping habits and develop a plan to quit that allows you to minimize problems after surgery.
2. Please avoid aspirin-containing or ibuprofen-containing medications for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery. These medicines may increase your risk of bleeding. Other medications and supplements to avoid include high dose (greater than 800 IU/day) vitamin E, ginger, turmeric, ginkgo, garlic, ginseng, St. John's wort, cumin and others. If in doubt, please hold any non-essential supplements for 2 weeks prior. Please be sure to discuss all prescription and over the counter medications with Dr. Owens.
3. You will be given prescriptions for pain medicine and anti-nausea medicine, as well as ointment that is safe to use around the eyes. Please have all prescriptions filled prior to surgery and ready at home to use upon return from the surgery center.
4. Pain relief may be adequate with ice and over the counter medications, and we recommend using both ibuprofen (Advil) and extra strength acetaminophen (Tylenol) on a schedule beginning the day of surgery. You may either alternate ibuprofen 800mg three times daily with acetaminophen 1000mg three times daily or take them together three times daily. Use prescription pain medicine as needed for pain unrelieved by this regimen. In most cases you will need to take the narcotic on the first day or two and then should be able to taper its use while still using the over the counter medications. Please follow your regular doctor's advice about dosing of these medicines if you have any conditions that limit your ability to safely take them.

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Breast Augmentation
Tummy Tuck
Eyelid Surgery
Facelift/Browlift
Breast Reconstruction

Breast Lift
Liposuction
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5. Keep head elevated at least to 45 degrees; plan for a wedge pillow, recliner chair, or other comfortable means of achieving this position. Plan to sleep upright and on your back for at least 3 weeks following the procedure while initial swelling is resolving, and possibly longer if needed. Avoid putting head in downward facing position or bending over in the first few weeks. It is useful to have available any assistive devices such as a grabber at home prior to surgery.
6. You should use ice to eyelids nearly continuously in the first 2-3 days and as needed after that if you have had eyelid surgery. You may also use ice to the neck and behind the ears for facelift surgery to minimize pain and swelling. Avoid heavy ice packs, use frozen wetted gauze pads or paper towels for eyes, or lighter beaded gel packs (TheraPearl eye mask is a good option)
7. Apply ophthalmic ointment to eyelids 4-6 times daily and bland ointment such as Vaseline or Aquaphor to other incisions as directed. The goal is to provide a moisture barrier to avoid crusting and scabbing from any drainage you may have. It is normal to have drainage for the first several days. Keep incision sites clean by gently wiping away the ointment before re-applying.
8. It is not uncommon to experience dry eyes in the first week or two after surgery, which may be worse in the morning due to incomplete closure of the eyelids while they are swollen. If you experience irritation or itching, please use artificial tears and the prescription ophthalmic ointment to protect the eyes from dryness and corneal irritation.
9. You can expect swelling and bruising, especially around the eyes, for the first several days. If you had lower lid surgery the swelling may last well into the second week post op. If you develop significant swelling on one side more than the other, increased pain, or change in vision, please call the office immediately. This can be a vision-

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threatening condition and should be evaluated urgently. Similar findings or symptoms in front of the ear should be reported if present.

10. It is normal to experience numbness in the surgical areas for several months, and immediately around the incisions forever. Women may especially notice this when applying eye makeup or putting in earrings. When cleared to perform regular skin care, you can do gentle massage which helps with restoring sensation.
11. You may drive as soon as you have discontinued prescription pain medicine and are able to see and turn your neck comfortably. For most patients this is after one week.
12. There may be significant social downtime. It is recommended that you not plan any major events sooner than 4 weeks after surgery, and plan to be off work for anywhere from one to 3 weeks depending on the extent of your surgery and procedures performed. Try to arrange to work remotely for the first few weeks if possible.
13. You will have several office visits within the first 2 weeks following surgery for removal of sutures. Please be sure to arrange for a ride for any visits within the first week.
14. Walking daily is encouraged, but please be prepared to take some time off from strenuous exercise. You may generally resume light cardio workouts after 3 weeks, but should not do any exertional class activities, inversions, or weights above your head until at least 5-6 weeks post-op.

If you have any questions about your recovery that have not been addressed, please call the office for further instructions, 410.747.2020

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