

General Instructions for Plastic Surgery Procedures

1. Stop smoking at least 6 weeks preoperatively and for at least 4 weeks while recovering. Both cigarette smoke and nicotine make it harder for your tissues to heal by decreasing the oxygen delivered to the surgical site and limiting blood flow. Depending on the type of surgery planned, this can have severe consequences. Discuss your smoking/vaping habits with Dr. Owens and determine a safe timeline to plan your surgery that minimizes your complication risk.
2. Avoid aspirin and ibuprofen-containing medications at least 2 weeks prior to and 2 days after your procedure. 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. If you have been advised by your primary care doctor or specialist to take aspirin or other blood thinners for a history of stent, heart disease, or vascular disease, we generally want you to continue those medications. For most minor procedures we will not have you hold your prescription blood thinning medications. Please be sure to discuss all prescription and over the counter medications with Dr. Owens.
3. Use ice to the surgical site for 10-15 minutes at a time for the first 48 hours after surgery and continue as needed or desired for comfort. This will reduce swelling, bruising, and drainage and will provide pain relief to the site. The operative site may not have normal sensation for several weeks and you may not notice if the ice is too cold, so please be sure to always have a cover over the ice between your skin and the ice pack to avoid thermal injury. For more major procedures it is a good idea to have several re-freezable gel ice packs on hand before surgery, so they are readily available post-op.
4. Elevate the surgical site as much as possible for the first few days, and possibly longer for some procedures. This may include using extra pillows or sleeping in a recliner for procedures of the face, head, and neck. Avoid bending forward with face down for procedures involving these areas.

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Breast Augmentation
Tummy Tuck
Eyelid Surgery
Facelift/Browlift
Breast Reconstruction

Breast Lift
Liposuction
Body Contouring
Breast Reduction
Botox/Fillers



5. You may use Tylenol/acetaminophen according to labeled instructions for any discomfort not relieved by use of ice after the procedure. Local anesthetic (numbing medicine) will usually start wearing off in 4-6 hours. It is helpful to take first dose PRIOR to numbing wearing off for most benefit.
6. Avoid strenuous activity/exercise for at least 48 hours after even minor procedures. Any significant increase in heart rate or blood pressure can result in increased swelling, drainage, fluid collections, and disruption of incisions. For some procedures there will be longer duration of activity restrictions and more specific range of motion limitations, but in general do not perform any activities that move the site or stretch the area excessively before fully healed (4-6 weeks). For minor procedures you may resume normal daily activities including driving right away.
6. Expect some drainage from the incision site in the first 2-3 days. This may be more noticeable initially when the epinephrine in the numbing medicine first wears off. As things heal the drainage will naturally decrease. If drainage seems excessive, hold pressure over the area for 5 minutes by the clock and re-evaluate. If drainage continues to be a concern, please call the office for further instructions.
7. Your incision site(s) will be covered either with glue or a paper tape steri-strip. Please leave in place until the cover begins to come off on its own. Do not peel or pull off the cover before it is ready. If the tape strips are peeling off before your scheduled follow up visit, you may remove it completely and cover the site with a bandaid unless instructed otherwise. If the dressing becomes soiled or saturated with bloody drainage, please call the office to arrange a visit to have the dressing changed, If you have any question or concern about the dressing, please call the office for further instructions.
7. You may shower 24 hours after the procedure unless instructed otherwise. Avoid soaking(submerging) or scrubbing the incisions directly, and pat dry or air dry after showering. Please do not soak in a tub, pool, or hot tub until cleared by Dr. Owens.

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8. Drainage tubes if present should be stripped and emptied twice daily, and the amount of drainage recorded separately for each drain. Please bring record with you to follow up visits so that we may determine when the drains can come out. If you have any questions about the drains or what amount of drainage is appropriate, please call the office to discuss with the nurse.
9. Scar management will be discussed at post-op visits, but in general we recommend gentle massage of the incision in the direction of the incision beginning 4 weeks postop. You may use a commercially available topical scar product like BioCorneum, Mederma, or ScarGuard, but for most scars massage with a topical emollient like cocoa butter or Eucerin is adequate.
10. Avoid the sun. Sun exposure may delay the normal maturation of your scars and can result in prolonged redness or permanent pigmentation changes. If you must be in the sun, be sure to use a broad spectrum sunscreen containing zinc oxide and reapply often. Wear a hat. Wear SPF of at least 20 year-round.

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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