

# HOUSTON METHODIST ENT SPECIALISTS FACIAL PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

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## POST OPERATIVE CARE FOLLOWING F A C E L I F T

Call our office promptly *if*:

- √ **You have a fever or chills.**
- √ **There is an unusual amount of bleeding**
- √ **You have progressive bruising and increasing pain.**

(If any of the above should occur after regular office hours, we can be reached 24 hours a day through our answering service at **713-441-FACE (3223)**)

### What Can I expect?

- √ A large compressive dressing will cover the face and scalp for 24 hours after surgery.
- √ Pain is usually mild to moderate in intensity.
- √ Bruising and swelling will be present and should gradually subside over the next 10 to 14 days.
- √ It is not unusual to have drainage for the first 24 hours after surgery in the surgical drains.
- √ Dressings are usually removed on the first post-operative visit.
- √ Sutures are gradually removed over several post-operative visits.
- √ Numbness around the ear lobes will be present for at least 1 to 4 weeks.
- √ Some numbness in the neck skin is normal for several weeks (in the neck and face especially).
- √ Tightness when opening the mouth.

### How Do I Care For Myself After Surgery?

- √ Do not smoke for 3 to 4 weeks before and after surgery (preferably never). Smoking after surgery is similar to smoking before surgery; it slows the healing process and increases the risk of skin loss or damage.
- √ Avoid strenuous activity and/or exercise for two weeks or until approved by your physician.
- √ Wear elastic face support as prescribed by your physician for 7 days following surgery.
- √ You can shampoo your hair 2 to 3 days after surgery, using tepid water only.
- √ Minimize neck movement; turn from the shoulders
- √ Use care when brushing or combing your hair near the suture line for 3 weeks.
- √ You will need to be seen in the office the day following surgery and the dressing will be removed.
- √ Often, 1 or 2 surgical drains will be removed during this visit as well.
- √ If drains have been used, follow the instructions received at the surgery center.
- √ Clean the incision lines twice daily with half-strength Peroxide and apply Aquaphor.

### Medications after Surgery

- √ A prescription for pain medication will be given to you. Most often a drug like Tylenol with Codeine is used, which is adequate for pain control in most cases. Obviously, driving a car or any potentially dangerous activity is to be avoided because the pain medications can alter your performance.
- √ Avoid taking pain medications and antibiotics at the same time as the combination may cause stomach upset. Try to eat when taking these medications to further reduce stomach irritation.