



## Facelift Post-Op Care

Thank you for choosing Dr. Papanicolaou to perform your surgery. Please feel free to call us at 407. 478.3151 or email us at somaplasticsurgery1@gmail.com any time if instructions are not clear or issues are not addressed by this instruction sheet.

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- You will see Dr. Papanicolaou approximately five to seven days following your surgery.
- Most importantly, **relax following your surgery.** Expect to have less energy than usual the first few days after surgery. You can expect some drainage on your dressings covering incisions. Maximum discomfort will occur in the first few days after surgery, and most people are up and around in 3-5 days.
- If you take regular medications, ask Dr. Papanicolaou when it is safe to resume taking them.
- **You may become constipated** due to pain medications and should begin a stool softener (i.e. Colace) after surgery. In addition, you may want to add a fiber supplement (Metamucil, Citrucel, etc.) after tolerating a diet to decrease straining. If you have gone several days without a bowel movement and are feeling uncomfortable, you may want to consider using a glycerin suppository or Fleet's enema (available at most drug stores).
- Sutures are dissolvable. They are under your skin and released at the end of each incision. They are clear in appearance and will be trimmed to the skin line at your first post-op appointment.
- Scars may become reddened before they fade. This is normal. Everyone heals differently, so be patient. However, by following these instructions you greatly increase your chances of having a good result. Dr. Papanicolaou will also instruct you in the use of Silagen to help improve the appearance of your scars.
- If you suddenly sit up or stand from a lying position you may become dizzy. If you are lying down following your surgery, make sure you sit for one minute before standing. Stand up slowly to provide time to steady yourself. If you feel dizzy when you sit or stand, you should lie back down immediately.
- Mild bleeding from the surgical site is not unusual. If bleeding does occur, go to bed, elevate your head, and apply and ice compress with mild pressure around the face and neck in 5 minute intervals. The main reason bleeding occurs is from patients elevating their blood pressure by bending, lifting, straining, coughing, sneezing, straining on the toilet and other strenuous activities.
- Swelling of surrounding tissues is to be expected and the amount varies from person to person. Do not be alarmed if one side of your face is slightly more swollen than the other. This is common and usually disappears within a few weeks. The swelling will start the day of surgery and will not reach its maximum until 2-3 days post-op. The skin of the face will feel tight for awhile due to swelling.
- In some cases, discoloration of the skin follows swelling. The development of black, blue, green or yellow discoloration is due to blood spreading beneath the tissues. This usually occurs 2-3 days post-op. Discoloration may take two weeks to resolve. Numbness of the skin around the surgical site is normal. This is usually temporary although some cases can be permanent.
- You will receive a phone call to confirm your follow-up appointment. **If you do not receive a phone call from our staff on the day prior to your appointment please call the office.**

### WHAT TO DO

- For the first ten days after surgery, **do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products (Bufferin, Anacin, Excedrin, etc.)**. If you need medication for a headache or other pain, Tylenol is safe when taken according to the directions on the label. However, your pain medication prescribed by Dr. Papanicolaou contains Tylenol as well. It is **NOT** safe to take regular Tylenol at the same time you are taking the pain medication because of the risk of permanent damage to your liver. Please read all labels carefully and be aware of the amount of medication you are taking.
- Do not take your pain medications on an empty stomach. Eat a light snack, such as crackers, about 30 minutes before you take your medication.
- You may take the pain medication (usually Lortab) as prescribed by Dr. Papanicolaou, immediately after waking up from surgery. You should not drink alcohol or drive an automobile while on this medication. This medication may also make you drowsy or give you an upset stomach. If this is the case, ask Dr Papanicolaou about alternative medications.
- You will also have a prescription for a strong muscle relaxant (usually Flexeril). This may be helpful to take if you are having muscle cramping in your back, chest, neck or shoulders following surgery. If you are taking pain medication and a muscle relaxant, do not take them at the same time because excessive sedation may occur. You may **space these medications out by approximately one hour to prevent excessive drowsiness and disorientation**.
- When deciding between muscle relaxant and the pain medication, it is usually best to use the pain medication for the surgical sites around the face (discomfort of the face), and reserve the muscle relaxant for shoulder, neck and back pain (discomfort located away from the face).
- **Take your antibiotics** (usually Augmentin unless you are allergic to penicillin) until they are all gone - usually five days after surgery. Dr. Papanicolaou may prescribed additional antibiotics if needed.
- You will be prescribed Zofran, the very latest and strongest anti-nausea medication available. You may take this every six hours the day of surgery and the day following surgery. At that time, any lingering effects from your anesthesia should have worn off, making further anti-nausea medications unnecessary.
- It is safe to shower on the second day following surgery. Blot dry wound area with a fresh clean cloth. The incisions should then be constantly covered with antibiotic ointment. Incisions should not be allowed to crust over. Be careful not to snag sutures that have been placed in the hairline.
- Hair dryers can be used on a low cool setting. The hot setting is not to be used for several weeks after surgery. Coloring of the hair is not to be done for 6 weeks following surgery. There may be transient thinning of the hair in areas adjacent to the suture lines in the temple and behind the ear.
- **Refrain from sleeping on your stomach**. Sleep elevated on your back until your first postop appointment unless otherwise directed by your doctor.
- **Do not drive or operate machinery while you are taking your narcotic pain medication**. If you are still taking narcotics by the time of your first postop appointment, then have someone drive you to your appointment.
- **You may use ice to help reduce swelling and discomfort**. Place crushed up ice in a zip lock bag with a thin towel around the bag then apply to surgical sites.

## RESTRICTIONS

- No heavy lifting (>25 lbs), vigorous activity, or straining for at least three weeks.
- Do not apply ice directly to skin, as you may still have numbness to areas. Sauna and steam baths should be avoided for six weeks following surgery.
- Do not swim in a pool or the ocean for three weeks following surgery.
- For the first ten days after surgery, do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products (Bufferin, Anacin, Excedrin, etc.)
- Walking is encouraged immediately post operatively. Exercise that raises your heart rate and blood pressure should be avoided for 2 weeks post-operatively. You may resume aerobic exercise (bike riding, aerobics, etc) two to three weeks after surgery. Common sense and good judgment are essential in avoiding injury at this point; start light and build up slowly. Avoid chest specific exercises and running or jumping. Also avoid sit-ups and abdominal exercises. All type of exercise are permitted after 6 weeks.

#### WHEN TO CALL

- If you develop severe shortness of breath or chest pain- call 911, then notify physician
- If you run a fever, or have chills- call our office
- If you have markedly increased pain, bruising, swelling, or bloody drainage- call our office
- If you develop leg swelling or calf pain- call our office
- If you have persistent nausea or vomiting- call our office
- If you are uncertain about a medication or treatment- call our office
- If you are experiencing any adverse symptoms or changes that you do not understand- call our office

Please remember that we are here for you to answer any and all questions, no matter how small! PLEASE PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING, ESPECIALLY 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO SURGERY. THIS IS TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE AND POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19.