

## After your Facelift

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### Instructions and Information from Dr. Dauwe

You will be drowsy following surgery- we have given you medications to help make you more comfortable. Expect to wake and doze on and off during the evening, so make yourself comfortable when you get home. The drowsiness will disappear in the evening or overnight. The day following your surgery you will feel a bit tired, but go ahead and begin to try and resume your normal activities “walking, sitting, etc.,” the day following surgery

You may feel a bit “stiff” when you first awake in the morning following surgery, but go ahead and move about without fear of disrupting anything. All of your incisions have been carefully reinforced so that anything short of drastic athletic activity will not affect them.

It’s not unusual to have some nausea following surgery, particularly if you begin to get up and move about too quickly. All nausea will be gone 6-8 hours following surgery. Although we’ve given you nausea medications, these medications are only about 80% effective, and you may still experience a bit of nausea. If so, simply relax, and don’t try to eat any heavy foods- just try clear liquids and work your way up to solids foods.

You have been given a prescription for pain medication. Please take a pill before bed the evening of surgery (preferably after you have kept something in your stomach to avoid stomach irritation). It’s a good idea to take another pill the morning following surgery, since you may feel a bit stiff and uncomfortable when you begin to move around. If the pill disagrees with you in any way, simply try Extra-Strength Tylenol. If for any reason you are experiencing significant pain, please notify the office.

You received antibiotics in your IV prior to surgery, so no further antibiotics are necessary. Infection following any type of plastic surgery is extremely rare. Infection is usually not apparent for several days following surgery. If you notice significantly increased redness or swelling accompanied by tenderness or fever at any time, call so that we may examine you. It’s normal to experience a low grade temperature up to 101°F following surgery. If your temperature elevates above 102°F please notify our office immediately.

If you were given a low dose steroid medication, please be sure to take this medication as exactly directed on the label.

Remember that swelling and bruising occur normally after any type of cosmetic surgery, and that the amount will always be different on the two sides. For the first 2-3 weeks following surgery, do not worry about the subtle differences you see in swelling or bruising as these differences are totally normal. If any areas of extreme bruising or swelling occur, contact us so that we may check them out.

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*AVOID ASPIRIN OR ANY MEDICATION THAT CONTAINS ASPIRIN, AND DO NOT SMOKE EVEN A SINGLE CIGARETTE OR USE ANY OTHER TYPE OF TOBACCO FOR AT LEAST THREE WEEKS FOLLOWING SURGERY.*

The morning following surgery, we will remove the rather tight head dressing (which keeps excessive fluid and bruising from accumulating beneath the skin), and replace it with a light elastic dressing with cotton underneath. You may remove the elastic dressing and cotton 48 hours following surgery and shower and wash your hair normally. The incision lines can be exposed to water without causing any harm. If any small amounts of bleeding occur from any of the incision lines, slight pressure with a washcloth or tissue will stop the oozing.

For the first 3 days following surgery, when you awaken in the morning your eyes will be more swollen than when you went to bed. If you can comfortably sleep on two pillows, slight head elevation may help reduce the swelling. However, if you are unable to sleep comfortably, it is far more important that you sleep well even on one pillow than forcing yourself to sleep on two. The swelling will go down during the day anyway.

Once we have removed the elastic head dressing the second day, it is not necessary to wear any further dressing.

Expect some drainage from the incision lines for a few days- drainage usually stops in three to five days. Clean the incision lines of the face and behind the ear with warm water and a clean washcloth to remove any dried drainage.

Swelling and bruising gravitates downward from your face to your neck. In the lower areas of your neck you will notice that there will be slight increased swelling for up to 2 weeks. Wearing a high necked blouse or scarf can easily hide neck swelling.

You may resume all normal activities the day following surgery. This means any activities short of exercise or heaving lifting. It is normal to feel a bit “washed out” the day following surgery, but if you will resume normal activity you will regain strength very rapidly.

Expect your face to feel “tight” to you for the first few days following surgery, especially when turning or lifting your head. This tightness is what guarantees a good long-term result with a facelift. We want you to feel tight for the first several weeks since we know that some loosening will occur.

Remember that bruising and swelling will be different on the two sides. Skin will feel numb in some areas and not numb in other areas. All of these differences are normal following this type of surgery, and will resolve over a few weeks. When in doubt, call the office as we are happy to schedule you to come in and see us.

In the area behind the ears, if any discoloration, bruising or blistering develop, simply keep the area clean. If any “raw” spots or drainage develop along the incision line, clean them with a warm clean washcloth and notify the office.

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Normal head movement, chewing and all other normal motions will not harm your result. Do not be afraid to perform all normal movements, even though things may feel a bit “tight.”

Feel free to apply makeup to any areas of the face. Cover-up type of makeups will hide your bruising, and you should be able to go on routine errands wearing sunglasses and a high neck scarf within a week.

*Please remember to others looking at you, with makeup on you'll look much better than before surgery within one to two weeks, even though swelling and bruising may still be present. Since you see every trace of swelling and bruising before you apply your makeup, it will be four to six weeks before you personally don't notice these.*

Tenderness around your ears is normal following surgery and may persist for one to two weeks. Sutures which anchor the tissue in its new position are attached in these areas, and are the source of this discomfort. As swelling resolves and tension decreases, the discomfort also decrease.

As your swelling begins to resolve and your face resumes normal mobility, you may feel that your face looks “different”, “unnatural”, or simply “not my face”. These feelings are common following a facelift. Although your face appears “fresher”, “less tired”, and “younger”, it will have a different appearance, and you must be patient while you adjust to the new look.

As sensation returns to the skin of your face and neck it is normal to feel “tingling” sensations, sharp pin prick type sensations, or “electric shock” type sensations. These effects are caused by the nerves regenerating in these areas. All of these sensations though uncomfortable, are a sign of healing and will return to normal over a period of weeks.

When you resume using cosmetics, no special type is required. Whatever type of cleansing agents and cosmetics agree with your complexion and skin reactivity you should continue to use.

Significant bleeding or fluid collection occurs very rarely following a facelift. You can recognize any significant fluid collection or bleeding by an increase in swelling in a single isolated area or the side of the face, usually accompanied by an increased discomfort and/or bruising. Should any of these occur, please contact the office immediately.

If you have additional questions or should any problems arise, please contact the office immediately by phone at 214-821-6580.