

# DAUWE PLASTIC SURGERY

## WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SKIN RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY

- Keep your **heart rate** below 100 for 3 weeks after surgery. This will minimize bleeding and bruising.
- Avoid **alcoholic beverages** for 1 week after surgery. It will make you bruise and perhaps bleed after surgery.
- Do not take any medications that **thin your blood** (ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen) for 3 days following surgery. If you take prescription blood thinners, please discuss the plan to resume these with Dr. Dauwe.
- Take your **pain medication** every 4-6 hours for the first 24 hours, then as needed.
- Narcotics cause constipation, so please try to wean yourself from these meds as soon as possible. Eat high fiber foods and take a stool softener like Senna or Colace (over the counter).
- You may take Tylenol, but some pain medications have Tylenol (acetaminophen) in them. Do not take more than 4000mg of Tylenol in a 24-hour period.
- You may **drive** after you are off narcotic pain medication, and you are able to physically react to traffic (swerving or slamming on your brakes).
- Sensations like numbness, tingling, and burning are common during the healing process. These sensations may last several weeks and will gradually disappear.
- Bruising and swelling are normal for 2-3 weeks. Sometimes this lasts longer, but it always goes away.
- You may **shower**, but do not let the stream of water directly contact the surgical site for the first 7 days.
- Dr. Dauwe will remove your stitches approximately 1 week following surgery.
- Do not bath/swim/submerge until 4 weeks after surgery. This is a serious infection risk.

## WOUND CARE

- Keep your surgical site clean and dry. You may clean the skin around your wound with soap and water.
- You may use a thin layer of antibiotic ointment on your incision, but it is not necessary.
- When the local anesthetic wears off, your incisions may be painful and may start to bleed. Please hold pressure with gauze until the bleeding stops.
- If you had a skin graft, please leave the bolster dressing in place and do not remove it. This dressing is keeping your skin graft adherent to the wound and is absolutely critical to healing. The donor site (where the skin graft was taken) is also important to keep clean and dry. If you can manage to keep the dressing in place for the first 5 days, that will help reduce pain. When the donor site dressing comes off, please replace it with a non-stick dressing like Vaseline gauze to prevent it from sticking to the wound.
- Dr. Dauwe will help you with scar management starting 3-4 weeks after surgery.

## TO SPEED YOUR RECOVERY

- Take a nap. After you leave our facility, go home and take a 2-hour nap. This will help you recover from the anesthetic and get you back in your home routine.
- Eat something substantial. You haven't eaten since the day before surgery. Your empty stomach is contributing to your fatigue and discomfort. Eat a normal meal, and you will feel better.
- Stay active, but not too active. Stay out of bed most of the day and move around the house. Keep your heart rate below 100 though.
- Minimize narcotic pain medication. Narcotic pain medication sedates you and slows you down. It will make you want to lie down. When you lie down, you get bored, and you think about how much you are hurting.
- Distract your brain. If you engage activities that distract you from the fact that you just had surgery, you will recover faster. Do not exert yourself, but watch TV, sit at the kitchen table and eat lunch/dinner, speak with friends/family on the phone, and engage in conversation. This helps tremendously.
- Move around. Keep your joints loose and muscles stretched. The stiffness in your shoulders, elbows, neck, and back contributes to your discomfort. Just like walking on a sprained ankle, moving around after surgery will quicken your recovery.

## REASONS TO CALL THE OFFICE

- Fever ( $>100.5^{\circ}$ ), redness, increasing tenderness at the surgical site, or other signs of infection
- Rash, shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling, diarrhea
- Bleeding that does not stop with gentle pressure for 20 minutes.

## IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 214-821-6580

- If you need immediate care, please call Dr. Dauwe's office at anytime. There is no such thing as a silly question. I would rather you call me and get it right, than not "bother" me and chance not doing the right thing.
- The office is open 9-5p (Mon-Thurs) and 9-3p (Fri).
- Please call the office and schedule the first follow up appointment for approximately 1 week following your operation.

Email: [julie@lemmonavenue.com](mailto:julie@lemmonavenue.com)

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