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Patient Instructions for Face Lifting

Preparations for Surgery:

For two weeks before and after surgery **AVOID** aspirin or products containing aspirin. Also avoid ibuprofen, naproxen, Vitamin E, and herbal supplements as these products make the blood more difficult to clot. Dr. Zimmel will provide you with a complete list of medications to avoid. You may, however, take Tylenol.

If you smoke Dr. Zimmel urges you to quit as ***least six weeks prior to surgery.***

You will be prescribed antibiotics, pain medication, and nausea medication for you during your final preoperative visit. We recommend filling these prescriptions before the day of surgery for your comfort and convenience.

Contact lenses: Remove contact lenses prior to surgery and do not wear them for one day after surgery.

Do not color, perm, or chemically treat your hair for three weeks before or after surgery.

Please shower and shampoo the evening AND morning before surgery.

Wear comfortable clothing such as a warm up suit to surgery.

Immediately Following Surgery:

You should plan to be off work for up to 5-7 days, although this can vary from person to person.

After surgery you will rest quietly for the first 48 hours. You will be able to walk around the house and perform light daily activities. However, during this time, it is not at all unusual for you to feel some pain, soreness and pressure around the face and neck. This will gradually subside and Dr. Zimmel will give you pain medication to relieve it. You must take the entire prescription of antibiotics.

Be sure to keep your head elevated at all times for one week after surgery. You will need to sleep on two or three pillows in order to keep your head elevated. This is the most important factor that will improve the swelling.

The swelling will peak on the second and third days after surgery and then will gradually subside. While lying on pillows do not flex the neck.

Do not bend over, tie your shoes, perform any lifting, and avoid any other activity where your face is below the level of your heart.

Please do not take your pain pills on an empty stomach as this may increase nausea.

Your sutures will be removed over a five to ten day period during your initial post-op visits. You may not drive until Dr. Zimmel instructs you to.

You will be allowed to shower three days after surgery. When taking a shower, you may wash your hair normally with shampoo. Do not let the water beat directly down on your face, but just let the water wash over the incisions. Pat the incisions dry and then apply a small amount of antibiotic cream recommended by Dr. Zimmel. This daily routine will help keep the incisions clean, and will promote wound healing.

Do not submerge yourself in a bath, swimming pool, or whirlpool for two weeks.

A few patients react to the anesthetic after surgery with nausea and vomiting. This usually lasts less than 24 hours and should be treated with lots of fluids. Dr. Zimmel will prescribe nausea medicine for during your preoperative visit.

You may use your eyes for reading or TV viewing as frequently as you wish.

Dr. Zimmel will prescribe antibiotic ointment. You will apply this twice per day until the sutures are removed.

The maximum swelling occurs between two and three days after surgery and then begins to dramatically improve. Mild bruising typically resolves within 14 days. Dr. Zimmel recommends you rest at home for two full days after surgery. You may then go out with sunglasses and a hat to shade the incisions. You will be “socially presentable” in 10 to 14 days.

You should avoid sun tanning the incisions for six months following surgery. Sun tanning newly healed incisions may cause the scars to become darker and more pigmented. You must use number 30 or greater SPF sun block covering the incisions when going out in the sun.

Eye Lubrication: Keep your eyes lubricated for the first several days after surgery. The best lubricant is artificial tears. The drops should be used every four hours and whenever there are symptoms of dry eyes. Symptoms after eyelid surgery (e.g., itching, irritation, stinging, redness, pain, even tearing) are almost always due to dryness of the surface of the eye. There is no such thing as too much eye lubrication, so use the drops and ointment liberally.

Additional Post-Operative Instructions:

You may resume wearing make-up 48 hours after the sutures are removed.

No heavy exercise or lifting for three weeks following surgery. This will allow the wounds to heal without tension.

Dr. Zimmel encourages walking immediately after surgery. This activity will greatly minimize the risk of deep clots in your leg veins.

Any apparent redness of the whites of the eyeball is only a form of bruising, and will subside during the early healing process.

It is not abnormal to feel slight itching and tightness around the cheeks and face during the early healing period.

Sexual Activity: Refrain from sexual activity for two weeks.

Driving: Do not drive an automobile for one week after surgery.

Please notify Dr. Zimmel if:

- One half of your face appears much bigger than the other
- If you develop a temperature above 101.5° F
- If you develop redness (like a sunburn) on your face

If you need help or have any questions feel free to call Dr. Zimmel at (804) 423-2100 with your concerns. Dr. Zimmel is on call 24 hours per day, seven days per week and has an answering service to forward calls.

The quality of your cosmetic enhancement may be compromised if you fail to return for any scheduled post-op visits, or follow the pre- and post-operative instructions.

Don't hesitate to report any unusual or concerning changes.