

JACQUELINE BRAMBILA, PA-C
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Certified, The American Board of Plastic Surgery

FACELIFT / NECKLIFT AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- After surgery, please have someone available to stay with you for the first 24 – 48 hrs. You will be weak/drowsy.
- It is important to get out of bed early and often after your surgery (with assistance) to prevent problems.
- A light diet is best after surgery. Begin by taking liquids slowly and progress to soups or Jell-O. You may start a regular diet after 48 hours.
- Take pain medication with food. You will be given an anti-anxiety/muscle relaxant medication (Valium) that you may take as well to prevent aggravation of the pain cycle. When taking Valium, take it 1 – 2 hours after the pain medication. Take a stool softener with pain medication to prevent constipation (like Ducolax over the counter)
- **DO NOT SMOKE.** This is very important!!! Smoking can result in a lack of blood supply to tissues and fat causing tissue death or delayed wound healing. Even 0% nicotine vapes contain a trace amount of nicotine that the FDA accepts as 0%. Smoking can resume 6 wks after surgery as long as no challenges in healing are present.
- Avoid straining of any kind for the first 5 days. Avoid turning your head to either side as this will pull on the stitch lines. To turn, move your head and shoulders as a unit.
- Facial movements (smiling, talking, chewing, yawning, etc.) should be kept to a minimum for the first week.
- Apply covered ice bags or Swiss eye masks (keep them cold or in ice) to the exposed areas of your face for the first 48 hours to reduce swelling post-operatively. Do not remove head dressing at this time. You will have your head dressing removed by Jackie (PA-C) or Dr. Dubrow the next day after your surgery.
- You can expect some swelling of the face and eyes after surgery. If you develop acute onset of swelling on one side of your face or neck, which is definitely more pronounced than on the other side, or if you are having pain, which is NOT relieved by the pain medication, please call Jackie (PA-C) or Dr. Dubrow.
- If compression stockings were provided, please leave the compression stockings on for 5 days after surgery. They may be removed when showering but must be replaced after. You can purchase additional compression socks at Target if needed.
- Remember the Five W's:
 - a. **Wind:** Take 10 deep breaths per hour. The most common cause of fever / elevated temperature after surgery is due to collapse of the lungs (atelectasis). In order to decrease your body temperature and expand the lungs, it is important to do this exercise.
 - b. **Water:** Dehydration can also cause an increase in body temperature. It is important that you remain hydrate since abdominoplasty and liposuction deplete your body of water.
 - c. **Walk:** Get up and walk every hour to keep your blood moving. This is key for preventing a blood clot.
 - d. **Wonder drugs:** Take your pain medication as needed. If 1 tablet is not sufficient, then take 2 tablets every 4 or 6 hours (of Percocet, Vicodin, Norco).
 - e. **Wound:** Observe the wound for redness, heat, discharge (pus), and openings.

Sleeping and Bathing:

- Following surgery, sleep on back for 2 weeks. Keep head elevated on two pillows while sleeping or sleep on recliner at a 45-degree angle.
- Shampoo 24 hours after removal of the drainage tubes. This is to keep suture lines clean. Lather your hair gently using the palms of your hands and rinse thoroughly until the soap is out. It may take several washings before all the crust and ointment is out of your hair.
- Do not use hairspray, conditioner, gels, etc. while the stitches are in place. You may start washing your face gently and use a moisturizer on your face, being careful to keep it away from the stitch lines.
- Your hair may be dried with a blow dryer on a cool, not a hot, setting.

Beauty and Sun Protection:

- Hair coloring should be delayed until 5 weeks after surgery when healing is completed and no crust remains.
- Cosmetics can be worn on the face as early as 10 days after surgery. However, eyelid or eyelash cosmetics should not be worn until 7 days after all the eyelid sutures have been removed. There may be a feeling of numbness of the eyelids that will subside.
- **DO NOT WEAR PULLOVER CLOTHING OR HAIRPIECES FOR 3 WEEKS AFTER YOUR FACELIFT, AS YOU COULD DISRUPT YOUR EARLOBE OR HAIRLINE INCISIONS.**

- The skin of your face is sensitive to sunlight after surgery. Protect your facial skin from excessive exposure to the sun for 8 weeks. Wear a wide brim hat and sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater with UVA and UVB protection) if you are in the sun for prolonged periods, or even on cloudy days for at least 6 months.

Exercise:

- No strenuous activities, including sex and heavy housework, for at least 3 weeks. Walking and mild stretching are permissible.
- Normal activity can be gradually resumed after 3 weeks but strenuous activity (heart rate above 100 beats per minute and lifting objects greater than 10 pounds) should be avoided for another week. This includes sexual intercourse and sexual activity.

Drains, Sutures, and Chin Compression:

- You may have drains in place under the skin, after surgery (in the neck.) which are used to draw off any accumulating fluid after surgery. The bulb should be kept collapsed at all times. The fluid will need to be removed from the bulb daily or when half full. Please keep a record of what time and how much fluid is emptied from the bulb. Bring this record with you to the office appointment. The drains will not be removed if you have drained more than 25 cc within a 24-hour period (see diagram).
- The drains and head dressing are usually removed within 1 – 2 days.
- Sutures will be removed at 7 days.
- The chin compression garment should be worn for the first 7 days after surgery.

Scar Care:

- Incision scars can be massaged with the scar therapy cream (like Biocorneum sold here) starting at week 3, or as soon as scabs have fallen (as early as 10 days). This will promote early softening and maturation of these areas.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Your face/neck will feel tight but not necessarily look tight (it will look natural) and there will be a feeling of numbness in these areas for several weeks to months after surgery. This is normal and will disappear over time and the feeling will return.
- Swelling, bruising and numbness is normal and to be expected.
- Expect a bruised and puffy face for 7 – 14 days, although some patients do not bruise at all.
- You can return to work by 2 weeks.
- By the third week, you will look and feel much better.
- Final result is not fully realized for approximately 3 months

Follow up appointments

- It is important to be seen by Jackie (PA-C) after your initial post-op checks.
- Jackie (PA-C) will see you in follow-up appointments: 1 wk, 3 wks, 6 wks, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year.
- If you are from out-of-town and cannot see Jackie at the recommended frequency, then it is strongly advised that you establish a relationship with a provider in your hometown who can follow your progress or evaluate you in case of infection, wound separation, or seroma. Jackie/Dr. Dubrow cannot evaluate or treat you over the phone.
- Call to schedule your appointments at (949) 515-4111 between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM to schedule.

Please call the office at (949) 515-4111 or Jackie (PA-C) at her cell phone at (818) 681-5882 if:

- Redness, increased pain at surgical incision sites, sudden increase in swelling, warmth, drainage (pus), or oral temperature greater than 101°
- Nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medication
- Please call between the hours of 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM. If you need immediate care, please call Jackie anytime on her personal cell phone. There is no such thing as a minor question. I would rather you call me than wonder and not do the right thing, so please call my office, text me, or email me anytime.
- **IF AT ANY POINT YOU EXPERIENCE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, PLEASE VISIT YOUR LOCAL EMERGENCY ROOM PROMPTLY AS THIS COULD INDICATE A PULMONARY EMBOLISM (BLOOD CLOT IN LUNG)**
- Any questions in regards to scheduling or confirming appointments should be communicated with the office staff (not Jackie) at 949-515-4111. If it is the weekend, please contact your surgical coordinator (Maryam or Kim) with those questions.

You may call, text, or email Jackie (PA-C), with any questions or concerns at 818-681-5882 or at jacqueline@drdubrow.com. Please include your name, surgery, date of surgery, and question in text message or voicemail.