

**JACQUELINE BRAMBILA, PA-C**  
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**OTOPLASTY AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

**PLEASE READ ME BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY ☺**

**ABOUT JACKIE:**

*My name is Jackie, and I am a board-certified and licensed physician associate (PA-C) working alongside Dr. Terry Dubrow. My job is to ensure that you heal optimally in the postoperative period. As Dr. Dubrow's "right-hand gal," I will work very closely with you during your postoperative and follow-up appointments developing diagnostic and therapeutic plans to ensure optimal recovery. You will be seeing me for **all** of your postoperative visits. Thank you for trusting me with your surgical and postsurgical care. These postoperative instructions will help guide your recovery process; **it is imperative that you and any of your caretakers carefully read these instructions before and after surgery.***

**THINGS TO PURCHASE before surgery:**

1. **Stool softener** (Ducolax, Miralax, Metamucil, or Peri-Colace)—Pain medication can constipate you. Peri-Colace is my favorite as it helps soften the feces (“the mush”) and also helps stimulate the bowels (“the push”). These should be started the day after surgery.
2. **Dial® antibacterial bar soap:** You will use this bar soap the morning of surgery to wash the surgical areas. You do not need to use this soap in the postoperative period as it will dry out your skin. You may resume your normal soap postoperatively.
3. **Arnika and Bromelin:** These are herbal supplements that aid in bruising and swelling. You can purchase these products at our office (\$30 for a 1-week supply), Whole Foods or Sprouts. You can begin these supplements up to one week before surgery and use them for 2 weeks after surgery.
4. **Compression stockings:** We will provide you with 1 pair of compression stockings immediately after surgery. Please plan to purchase an additional pair at Target® in the event that your socks become soiled or are uncomfortable. They will need to be worn for 5 days postoperatively.
5. **Oral Thermometer:** It is important to monitor your temperature after surgery in the event that you feel “feverish” or hot. You have a fever if you have a temperature above 101.5.
6. **Rapid Recovery and Healing Protocol, IV Therapy with Dr. Todd Newman:** Consider this therapy in our office before and/or after surgery to improve wound healing, decrease recovery time, decrease scarring, improve sense of well-being and reduce pain and discomfort during your post-surgical course. You can find additional information about this in the “Rapid Recovery and Healing Protocol, IV Therapy” section of the post-operative instructions and also in the separate handout provided to you in your preoperative care folder provided to you during your preoperative appointment.
7. **Read the “Preparing for Surgery” document enclosed in your preoperative folder.**

**WALKING:**

- It is important to get out of bed early and often after your surgery (with assistance) to prevent postoperative problems. It is good to walk for 15 – 20 minutes 6 times per day or get up every hour to walk to the restroom and back. This encourages blood flow throughout your legs to reduce the chance of blood clot development.
- **IF YOU HAVE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, LEG SWELLING, AND/OR LEG PAIN AT ANY POINT IN YOUR POSTOPERATIVE HEALING, GO TO AN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY (OR CALL 911) AS THIS COULD SIGNIFY A BLOOD CLOT.**

**COMPRESSION STOCKINGS/TRAVELING/PRECISION DVT PREVENTION DEVICE:**

- **Compression Stockings:**
  - If compression stockings were provided, please leave the stockings on for 5 days after surgery. They may be removed when showering but must be replaced after your shower. You can also purchase additional compression socks at Target® if needed if the ones provided in surgery are too large or too small or become soiled.
- **Precision DVT Prevention Device:**
  - If it is determined that you are a high-risk patient for developing a blood clot, (a DVT), you will be provided with a DVT prevention device to be used on your legs in the postoperative period.



- You will need to wear your device anytime you are not ambulating for the first 30 days after surgery.
- The device will stay charged for up to 8 - 10 hours. The device will charge in 2 hours.
- The device is yours to keep and can be worn in the future for DVT prophylaxis when traveling long distances.
- Please plan to bring your device to your first 3 postoperative visits so that we can document the amount of time the device has been worn (to ensure compliance).
- **Traveling:**
  - If you are an out-of-town patient and will be traveling back home after your surgery, please wear your compression stockings and DVT prevention device on the plane and remove them after landing.
  - If you do not have the DVT prevention device, please only wear the compression stockings and when on the airplane, please be sure to get up every hour to walk around and encourage blood-flow in your legs. Also, be sure to wiggle your ankles when sitting as if pressing a gas pedal to promote blood flow.
  - It is safe to fly 1 week after surgery if you have been cleared by Jackie to do so.
  - If you experience shortness of breath after a flight or leg pain with extreme leg swelling, please visit an Emergency Department immediately to rule out a blood clot.

### **PAIN AND PAIN MEDICATION:**

- 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.
- Percocet (Oxycodon + Acetaminophen) or Vicodin (Hydrocodone + Acetaminophen) should be taken as directed:
  - **Mild to moderate pain:** 1 tablet every 4 – 6 hours as needed
  - **Severe pain:** 2 tablets every 4 – 6 hours as needed
- If your pain is mild, or if you do not like the effects of the narcotics, you can take Tylenol® (Acetaminophen) 1000mg every 8 hours (which would be 2 tablets of the Extra Strength Tylenol®, purchased over the counter). Please do not exceed 3000mg in a 24-hour period.
- We will provide every patient with **1 refill** of the pain medication and the Valium if needed **one week after the last prescription was filled**. No additional refills will be provided.
  - If you require additional pain medication, please reach out to your primary care provider for pain management or visit an urgent care as we will not provide additional refills after the 1 allotted refill.
- We cannot call-in/fax/email/mail a refill for pain medication to a pharmacy. If you are an out-of-town patient, visit your local provider, urgent care, or ER for pain management.
- Take a stool softener with pain medication to prevent constipation.
- **DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION** or Valium. These medications can result in drowsiness. If you are pulled-over while driving under the influence of narcotics or scheduled substances, you will get a DUI!
- **DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS** or Valium. This can be a deadly combination.
- Only take the pain medication if needed. The quicker you can wean off of the pain medication, the better you will feel and heal.

### **DO NOT SMOKE. *This is very important!!!***

- Smoking (tobacco, marijuana, or vapes) 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 weeks after surgery as long as no challenges in healing are present.

### **SUPPLEMENTS:**

- Do not take aspirin (or products containing aspirin) or Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Midol®) for 3 weeks after surgery. Also do not begin herbal supplements until 3 weeks after surgery.
  - Arnika, Bromelin and Vitamin C are okay to take.
- Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after surgery as these supplements increase heart rate and blood pressure and can interfere with your recovery.

### **REMEMBER THE FIVE W'S:**

- *The most common cause of an **elevated temperature/fever** after surgery is due to collapse of the lungs (atelectasis). This is a normal occurrence as a result of anesthesia and the physical stress your body is undergoing. In order to decrease your body temperature and expand the lungs, it is important to do the following:*
  - **Wind:** Take 10 deep breaths per hour for the first 72 hours.
  - **Water:** Dehydration can also cause an increase in body temperature. It is important that you remain hydrated since surgery can deplete your body of water. 64 ounces of water a day is encouraged.
  - **Walk:** Get up and walk once every hour to keep your blood moving. This is key for preventing a blood clot.

- **Wonder drugs:** Take your pain medication or Tylenol® as needed. An increase in pain can cause an increase in body temperature.
- **Wound:** Observe the wound for redness, heat, discharge (pus), and openings.

### **SHOWERING:**

- You may shower (but not bathe) in 3 days after surgery.
- You may wash the surgical area with soap (any kind) and water (lukewarm, never hot). Do not use surgical soaps to wash the area as these are drying to the skin. Use regular soap.
- Remove all your garments, dressings when showering. When out of the shower, blow dry incisions on a cool setting and apply usual compression garments.
- No hair spray or hair products for one week

### **DIET:**

- 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 the next day.
- Though it is impossible to get rid of gas entirely, there are strategies to reduce it. Eat and drink slowly, chew thoroughly and cut down on carbonated drinks. Avoid sugar-free gums and sugar-free candies that contain sorbitol or zylitol – both sweeteners are poorly digested and can result in bloating.
- Stay on a soft diet, high in protein, for 2 – 3 days and avoid spicy food which can cause nausea and gas. Then you may resume a normal, high protein diet.

### **ACTIVITIES**

- It is important to relax and keep your head elevated the night after surgery
- Adults can go back to work approximately 5 days after surgery, depending upon the occupation.
- You may resume full social activities in 5-10 days.
- Avoid any activity in which the ear might be bent for approximately a month.
- You may resume contact sports in 1-2 months.
- No strenuous exercise for at least two weeks.
- No heavy lifting for three weeks.
- No “pull-over” clothing for two weeks.
- Avoid hard chewing foods for two weeks.

### **INCISION CARE**

- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.
- Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).
- Keep incisions clean and inspect daily for signs of infection.
- Wear chinstrap or head band dressings all day for 14 Days. This is important to keeping your new ears in position. After that, wear a clean headband at night for 3-6 weeks.

### **SUTURES:**

- We use Prolene sutures which are made of a non-absorbable material. Sutures will be removed between **10-14 days** from surgery depending on your healing progression.
  - If you are an out-of-town patient, please plan to either stay until your 2-week visit, return to our office at your 2-week visit, or have a provider in your hometown remove the sutures.
  - Keep in mind that providers in your hometown may refuse to remove your sutures. It is imperative that you call your local provider in advance to ensure that they are comfortable with removing your sutures prior to you leaving us. We do not and will not provide referrals for postoperative care for out-of-town patients. Patients are responsible for coordinating their own postoperative care should they choose to have their sutures removed elsewhere.
- Do not apply anything on your incisions for 3 weeks unless Jackie asks you to do so. Keep the incisions clean and dry.
- 3 – 4 weeks after all sutures have been removed (or when all of your scabs have fallen off), you can begin scar treatment:

### **WHAT TO EXPECT**

- Temporary throbbing, aching, swelling, redness and numbness.
- Large pressure dressings/bandages are applied around the ears and head, turban style immediately after surgery.

- Some swelling and bruising may last 10-14 days. Swelling will vary patient-to-patient. Swelling may actually increase the first three to four days before subsiding. Most of your swelling should resolve over the first two to three weeks. Do expect, however, to have minor fluctuations in the remaining swelling over the course of the next two to three months. Things to do to minimize this swelling include keeping your head elevated as much as possible over the first two to three weeks, avoiding bending over or heavy lifting for the first three weeks, and avoiding prolonged sun exposure for the first two to three months.
- Some numbness may exist around the operative areas. Unusual sensations, pins and needles, and occasionally mild discomfort may occur as these nerves regenerate over time
- Tenderness could last up to 3 months.
- Usually, there will be a faint scar in the back of the ear that will eventually fade.
- Do not expect both ears to match perfectly, as perfect symmetry is unlikely and unnatural in ears.

#### **EMOTIONAL EXPECTATIONS FOLLOWING SURGERY:**

- It is not unusual for patients to undergo significant emotional “ups and downs” after any type of surgery. Factors such as underlying stress, medications, and/or psychological tendencies can result in patients experiencing a “post operative depression” that generally resolves after a few weeks. Having a partner, family member, or friend who is supportive can help with this process. Understanding the stages of emotional “ups and downs” can help patients stay calm and recover from this emotional process faster:
  - **Phase 1: Being Out of It**
    - Swelling and discomfort is most severe over the first few days after surgery. Pain medications also can make you disoriented and emotional.
  - **Phase 2: Mood Swings**
    - Having just had surgery, patients are adjusting to a sudden change in their appearance with much anticipation. The presence of bruising, swelling, and asymmetries will distort a patient’s results thereby concealing the final outcome. Mood swings (especially sadness), worry and depression are common emotions as a result. Patients may even ask, "What have I done?" or think that "I never should have done it."
  - **Phase 3: Being over critical**
    - During the second week, patients will probably be feeling a lot better. The swelling and muscle cramping/spasms will be decreasing and sutures will be out. Because of anticipation, it is natural for patients to look critically at their new body worrying about symmetry, scars, and so on. At this point, it's normal to wonder if they have achieved their goal and what they paid for. This is too soon to tell and most concerns are resolved with time.
  - **Phase 4: Happy at last**
    - Finally, about **3 – 6 months out of surgery**, patients will probably start liking how they look and are feeling much better. They may be in the mood to check out some bathing suits or outfits to show off their new figure.

#### **RAPID RECOVERY AND HEALING PROTOCOL, IV THERAPY PACKAGE:**

- There are numerous benefits to receiving the Rapid Recovery and Healing Protocol, IV therapy package. Those benefits include, but are not limited to, improved wound healing, decreased recovery time, decreased scarring, improved sense of well-being and reduced pain and discomfort during your post-surgical course.
- Our single (pre-operative) IV package is typically given one to two days before your surgery. This easy to administer, 30 to 40-minute, infusion can be given at our Newport Beach office or in the comfort of your hotel room. A powerful mixture of fluids, vitamins, minerals and cofactors (glutathione), it is designed to optimize your nutritional status prior to surgery. Our infusions will give you everything you need to prepare your body for the stress of surgery, maximize your ability to heal and help you feel energized.
- Additional therapy sessions are undertaken on the first three days after surgery and beyond, as needed. During those days we will deliver additional fluids, vitamins, muscle relaxants, anti-nausea agents and non-narcotic pain relievers under the care of our M.D. wellness physician, Dr. Newman.
- Additional options to improve your surgical experience include pre-operative nutritional guidance as well as 4, 8 and 12-week post-operative nutrition and supplement programs. Finally, we can deliver delicious custom designed meals, snacks and beverages, to your home or hotel. These packages are not only delicious, but help to reduce inflammation, curb sugar craving, support healthy intestinal flora, and form a framework for a healthy eating habits long beyond your time in our care.

**FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENTS:**

- It is important to be seen by Jackie at your initial post-op checks.
- Jackie will see you in follow-up appointments:
  - Day one, 1 week, 2 or 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 1 year post-op.
    - These appointments are patient-specific and may vary depending on your own individual healing.
- 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 and Dr. Dubrow cannot evaluate you or treat you over the phone, via email, or from a distance. If you have a cosmetic or functional complication, please plan to visit our office for a postoperative visit or seek care from your local provider or local plastic surgeon. We cannot provide referrals and cannot manage complications from a distance.**
- Call to schedule your appointments at (949) 515-4111 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday – Thursday and between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM on Fridays. The office closed on Saturday and Sunday.

**PLEASE EMAIL JACKIE (PA-C) AT [JACQUELINE@DRDUBROW.COM](mailto:JACQUELINE@DRDUBROW.COM) IF:**

- You have general questions regarding your postoperative care or aesthetic concerns. Keep in mind that Jackie is seeing patients throughout the day and may not respond immediately. She checks her email at 9 am and at 5 pm and will respond accordingly.
  - Keep in mind that a discussion of aesthetic concerns requires a physical postoperative visit. If you need to schedule an appointment, please call the office at 949-515-4111.
  - Do not email Jackie to schedule appointments as she does not have access to the schedule.
- ***Please include your name, surgery, date of surgery, and question in Email!!!***

**PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 949-515-4111 IF:**

- You have redness, increased pain at surgical incision sites, sudden increase in swelling, warmth, drainage (pus), or oral temperature greater than 101.5°F
- You have nausea and vomiting despite Zofran use, rash, shortness of breath, leg pain with swelling, or diarrhea after taking your medication

**PLEASE VISIT AN EMERGENCY ROOM OR CALL 911 IF:**

- **At any point you experience shortness of breath or leg pain with swelling as this could indicate a pulmonary embolism (blood clot in lung) or dvt (blood clot in legs) and could be deadly if untreated.**

**PLEASE VISIT AN URGENT CARE ON THE WEEKENDS OR WHEN THE OFFICE IS CLOSED IF:**

- You have redness, sudden increase in swelling, warmth, drainage (pus), or oral temperature greater than 101.5°F

*Any questions in regards to scheduling, rescheduling, preoperative concerns, or confirming appointments should be communicated with the office staff (not Jackie) at 949-515-4111. If it is the weekend and you have scheduling questions, please contact your surgical coordinator (Maryam or Kim) with those questions.*