

Facelift Post Instructions

Facelift

Activity: For the first 24 hours, rest is absolutely necessary. Elevate the head and talk as little as possible. Sleep in a recliner if possible or with your head on several pillows.

Dressings: A large bulky dressing is placed immediately after the facelift. This is to catch any drainage, to provide gentle pressure to diminish swelling and to force the skin to re-adhere itself to deeper tissues, thus preventing fluid build up between the tissues. This dressing should be left undisturbed until I remove it on the first postoperative day. A smaller, lighter dressing replaces the bulky postoperative dressing. This should be left in place 3 more days for comfort and support. You may then shower, gently washing the hair with a mild shampoo. If there is no further drainage, another bandage will not be applied. Elastic compressive straps are generally prescribed for several weeks after the operation. These are easily removed for bathing. Please wear these as much as possible and especially at night.

Drains: Drains are usually placed under the skin to evacuate collections of serous (yellow) or blood-tinged fluid. These drains are connected to a plastic bulb which generates suction. If used, the drains will be removed within the first week by Dr. Zahir. If you do go home with a drain, we will instruct you in its management at that time.

Showering: You may remove your bandage but not the first day after your operation. Use a mild shampoo (like baby shampoo) to shampoo your hair and leave the incisions alone. Use a good conditioner to rid the hair of tangles. The hair is likely to be more tangled than usual due to bits of blood clinging to the hair. Brushing and blow drying the hair is allowed if performed carefully. The blow dryer should be set on low heat. Remember that the scalp may be numb in certain areas and in this unprotected state could be inadvertently burned. Hair coloring and permanents should be avoided until three weeks from the time the sutures are removed.

Postoperative Office Visits: Schedule your first postoperative visit for the first day after surgery. At this time, the drain in front of your ear will be removed. Your next visit will be a week.

Dr. Zahir uses dissolvable sutures. Dr. Zahir will then want to see you again in two to three weeks later, then as needed.

Driving: This should not be resumed until it is comfortable to move the head without any restrictions from pain or swelling. This is usually two weeks postop.

Exercise: During the first postoperative week, activity should be kept to a minimum – only what is necessary to take care of oneself. Over the following two weeks, exercise may be gradually increased. There should be, however, no strenuous activity as this may increase facial swelling and compromise the final result. Walking is a superb way of getting exercise and not jeopardizing the operation. After about three weeks, exercise may be increased incrementally until the normal routine is recognized at six weeks. Judgment, however, must be used. Not all patients heal alike. If any part of the convalescence is confusing, please call the office at 703-208-0783.