



MOUNT AUBURN HOSPITAL

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617-492-0620 FAX: 617-492-0631  
www.massplasticsurgeons.com



HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
TEACHING HOSPITAL

## **FACELIFT AND NECK LIFT (RHYTIDECTOMY) AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS**

- In the week before your operation:
  - Consider eating pineapple, it may help reduce bruising
  - Consider supplementing with Arnica montana, it may help reduce bruising
  - Complete household chores and prepare meals for the first few days of postoperative recovery
  - Follow preoperative instructions with eating, drinking, and medications
- **Postoperatively, get out of bed and walk (with assistance) every few hours after your operation to decrease the chance of postoperative problems such as blood clots.**
- Practice 15-20 deep breaths every hour to keep your lungs open.
- After surgery, it is important for you to have someone available to stay with you for the first 24-48 hours, as you may feel drowsy. You may require help the first few times you get out of bed.
- Please take your medications as directed by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan to manage discomfort or symptoms.
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1000 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Ibuprofen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin) 800 mg every 8 hours, space doses 4 hours after Acetaminophen so one or the other is taken every 4 hours
  - Gabapentin 300 mg every 8 hours for 7 days
  - Vitamin C 500 mg daily for 50 days
  - Oxycodone 5 mg – 1-2 tablets every 6 hours as needed for pain, though many patients may not need it
  - Colace 100 mg twice daily to prevent constipation, it is important to have a bowel movement each day
  - Zofran 8 mg every 8 hours if needed for nausea
  - Scopolamine patch will be placed on the neck on the day of surgery and can stay for 3 days
  - Bacitracin ointment twice daily to the incisions
- Eat a light diet for 2-3 days and avoid spicy food. Some suggestions to ease abdominal discomfort or indigestion after surgery:
  - Drink water or warm liquids

Please contact Dr. Helena O. B. Taylor or Dr. Stephen R. Sullivan for additional information on plastic surgery.

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- Prune juice to prevent constipation
- You may have drains under the skin in the neck. These will be secured and you can sleep with them, but avoid pulling on them. Keep the drainage bulbs compressed at all times. Instructions regarding the drains will be given to your caretaker or nurse. The drains and head dressing are usually removed by Dr. Taylor and Dr. Sullivan the morning after surgery.
- You may shower or sponge bath the day after the operation after your dressings and drains have been removed. You may wash your hair with a gentle shampoo and conditioner and your face with a gentle soap. Pat dry and then apply a thin layer of Vaseline or antibiotic ointment (e.g. Bacitracin or Polysporin) to incisions and suture lines for 5 to 7 days.
- Elevate your head and shoulders and when in bed keep your head elevated about 30 degrees (two pillows under your head and back) to help with the swelling.
- Do not smoke or expose yourself to smokers or nicotine as skin and wounds can be compromised.
- You may apply ice packs to the face and areas around the eyes for the first 48 hours to reduce swelling and bruising. Bags of frozen peas and corn make for excellent ice packs. You might also consider Icewraps Gel Packs or Swiss Safe gel packs, which can be ordered from Amazon or online. Apply the ice packs for 20 min of each hour while awake.
- Cosmetics can be worn on the face as early as 10 days after surgery as long as all sutures have been removed.
- Your hair may be dried with a blow dryer on a cool, not a hot, setting. Hair coloring or use of hair products should be delayed until 3 weeks after surgery or when all wounds are healed and there are no crusts or scabs.

#### **ACTIVITY**

- For the first week following surgery, raising your blood pressure and heart rate can cause bleeding. Avoid straining, stress on your facial muscles or vigorous activity. Facial movements (smiling, talking, chewing, yawning, etc.) should be kept to a minimum. We recommend walking 15 minutes 2 to 3 times per day.
- Please do not drive for 7 to 10 days or while taking pain medications such as oxycodone.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 lbs, run, lift weights, or perform strenuous exercise for 3 weeks. Normal activity can be gradually resumed after 3 weeks.
- Massage to the areas of scar and skin of the face and neck can help increase circulation and soften firm areas. Please wait at least 3 to 4 weeks after surgery to start massage to avoid increased swelling.

#### **GENERAL OUTCOMES**

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- Moderate swelling and bumpiness of your face and neck is to be expected. This is most notable in the neck and will increase for 48 hours. Much of the swelling usually resolves within the first few weeks after the operation. Though you may find that your neck is slower to resolve. A feeling of tightness of the face and neck is to be expected. Please be patient. The swelling and feeling of tightness will gradually subside over the following months.
- Bumpiness of the skin is also normal and will smooth out as the swelling resolves and the tissues soften.
- Tingling, itching, and numbness of the face and neck skin are all normal. Tingling and itching are signs of healing and will resolve. Sensation usually returns gradually and slowly over weeks to months. Please be patient and avoid resting against hot surfaces, which can injure or burn the skin.
- Scars and tissues take one full year to mature. You may notice that they become red, raised and firm for several weeks to months before becoming soft, flat and pale. Avoid Vitamin E as it can irritate the scar. Mederma has no proven benefit and is not worth the expense. All incisions will be sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Direct sun contact or tanning booths are to be avoided. Silicone cream or skin moisturizer with sunscreen and gentle massage may be helpful.
- A small amount bleeding from the incision is expected. Please call our office (617-492-0620) if you have:
  - Continuous bleeding
  - Significantly more swelling on one side when compared to the other
  - Worsening pain
  - Fever, spreading redness or irritation of the skin
  - Shortness of breath

It is important to be seen by Dr. Taylor or Dr. Sullivan after your operation. They will see you in follow-up appointments at 1 week, 3 weeks, 3 months, and 1 year or as often as needed post-op. Call to schedule your appointments at Taylor & Sullivan Plastic Surgery office at (617) 492-0620 between the hours of 8:30 – 5:00 or visit our webpage at [www.massplasticsurgeons.com](http://www.massplasticsurgeons.com). We are always available for postoperative concerns or emergencies and can be reached through our paging service 24 hours per day at (617) 492-0620.

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