

# Daniel O. Beck, MD

Dallas Plastic Surgery Institute

[www.beckplasticsurgery.com](http://www.beckplasticsurgery.com)

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## FACE/NECK LIFT AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS

1. After surgery elevate your head and shoulders at a 45° angle. A wedge rest is preferable to pillows, as you want to avoid bending forward at the neck for the first 2 weeks.
2. Avoid straining of any kind for the first 5 days. When awake in bed please flex your ankles and legs up and down 4-6 times every hour. This will help lower extremity circulation and minimize the risks of swelling and blood clots.
3. Apply covered ice bags or Swiss eye masks (keep them cold or in ice) to the exposed areas of your face for the first 72 hours to reduce post-operative swelling.
4. If you have pain or discomfort, take the pain medication every 4-6 hours. It is best to take the pain medication with crackers, Jell-O, etc. If you do not have pain please do not take the pain medication. Do not drink alcohol while you are taking pain medication. In addition, you may be given an anti-anxiety/muscle relaxant medication that you may take as well to prevent aggravation of the pain cycle.
5. A light diet is best following surgery that day. Begin by taking liquid slowly and progress to soups or Jell-O. You may start with a soft, regular diet the next day. Over the next 6 weeks, a high protein diet will benefit your recovery. Daily protein supplementation with pre-made shakes (eg. Boost, Muscle Milk) or soluble powder (whey, soy etc.) from a nutrition store is recommended.
6. You may have drains in place under the skin, after surgery (in the neck.) These will be secured and you will/can sleep with them. Avoid pulling on the drains. The bulbs connected to the end of the drains should be kept compressed at all times. Instructions regarding the drains will be given to your caretaker. The drains and head dressing are usually removed within 1-2 days.
7. After the drains have been removed, you may start cleaning along the incision lines, in front of and behind the ears, and under the chin with half strength hydrogen peroxide (dilute with water) twice daily. Apply a thin layer of polysporin (Neosporin type) ointment to these areas after cleaning for 2 days only.
8. After your dressings and drains have been removed you may wash your hair with baby shampoo. 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 and clips are in place. You may start washing your face gently with a mild soap (Neutrogena, Ivory, etc.) and use a moisturizer on your face, being careful to keep it away from the stitch lines.
9. Your hair may be dried with a blow dryer on a **cool, not a hot**, setting.
10. Swelling of the face and eyes after surgery is normal and expected. If you develop an 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 Dr. Beck immediately.
11. Facial movements (smiling, talking, chewing, yawning, etc.) should be kept to a minimum for the first week. 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.

12. **DO NOT SMOKE** or ingest any nicotine containing products. This is very important for optimal wound healing.

13. You may gradually resume normal daily activities after 2 weeks being careful to avoid any activity that causes pain or discomfort. Lifting of objects heavier than 10 pounds should be avoided for 3 weeks. Strenuous activities and exercises are to be avoided until 4 weeks after surgery. During the recovery period your heart rate should stay below 100 beats per minute.

14. All incisions and the skin of your face will be extremely sensitive to sunlight during the healing phase. Protect your facial skin from excessive exposure to the sun for 8 weeks. Direct sun contact or tanning booths are to be avoided. Wearing a wide brim hat and use of a clinical grade sunscreen with a SPF of at least 30 with zinc oxide (UVA and UVB protection) is recommended.

15. 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 of the eyelid sutures have been removed. There may be a feeling of numbness of the eyelids that will subside.

16. **DO NOT** wear pullover clothing or hairpieces for 3 weeks after your facelift, as you could disrupt your earlobe or hairline incisions.

17. Hair coloring should be delayed until 3 weeks after surgery when healing is completed and no crust remains.

18. **Beginning at 3 weeks after surgery**, apply a scar cream to the incisions to maximize wound healing. Use the cream for 6 months after surgery. The addition of a hydrating cream and vitamin cream will promote early softening and maturation of these areas.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SURGERY**

Sensations like numbness, sharpness, and burning are common during the healing process. These sensations may last several weeks and will gradually disappear.

Bruising and swelling are normal for 2-3 weeks. It will disappear over time.

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. The feeling will return.

#### **Please note:**

**- If you have nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, or diarrhea after taking your medications, please call our office.**

**- If you develop a fever (oral temperature greater than 100°), redness and/or increased pain at the surgical incision sites, please call Dr. Beck immediately.**

**FOLLOW-UP INSTRUCTIONS**

It is important to be seen by Dr. Beck after your initial post-op checks. He will see you for follow-up appointments at 1 week, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 1-year post-op. For your convenience you may schedule your appointments at either our Southlake or Dallas office (see below). To schedule your appointment please call us at 214-818-4751 between the hours of 8:30 am – 5:00 pm at least 1 week prior to your desired date.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL DR. BECK**

If you need immediate care, please call Dr. Beck anytime on his cell. 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, or email me anytime.

Dr. Beck’s cell: given at time of surgery

Dr. Beck’s office: 214-818-4751

Dr. Beck’s email: [drbeck@dpsi.org](mailto:drbeck@dpsi.org)

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