

DR. CUSHING'S POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Facelift/Neck lift

ACTIVITY

The first 24 hours are best spent resting. It is important to keep your head elevated while at rest to reduce swelling and pain. You should get up to walk to the bathroom and kitchen several times per day and try to take deep breaths several times an hour. This will help prevent blood clots in your legs and help your lungs heal from surgery.

You may resume many daily activities the day after surgery. Walking is encouraged. Exercise and lifting that requires straining (more than about a gallon of milk) should be avoided for 2 weeks post-operatively. You may resume aerobic exercise (bike riding, aerobics, etc) 3-4 weeks after surgery. All types of exercise are permitted after 6 weeks.

You may resume driving when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication during the day.

Average return to work time is around 2 weeks depending on the level of activity required by your job.

DRESSINGS/SHOWERING

You will have a dressing which will cover the ears, under the chin and over the scalp areas as well as a drain to help prevent fluid collections. This dressing will stay in place until we remove it in clinic the day after surgery. Sleep with your head elevated.

You may shower and gently wash your hair after the dressing is removed. Do not scrub in the area of incisions- let soap and water run over the incisions. Do not use any heat such as a blow dryer for about 2 weeks. Allow the incisions to air dry. Do not apply hydrogen peroxide or alcohol to the incisions.

To improve healing and reduce scarring, place antibiotic ointment or aquaphor to the incision lines twice a day until the incisions are healed.

The stitches will be removed at about 5 days after surgery and the staples will be removed a week after that.

It is important to be very gentle with these incisions- do not apply makeup for the first few weeks after surgery.

GARMENTS

After we remove the dressings on the first day, you will have a "chin bra" garment that can be removed to shower but should otherwise be worn 24/7 for the first two weeks after surgery and whenever possible in the 2-3 weeks after that. You may purchase additional garments from the surgery center or Amazon so you can switch them out while they are in the wash. Hand wash and air dry the garments.

DIET

Due to the anesthesia from your surgery, the tube placed in the throat may cause the throat to be sore. This is best relieved with cold liquids. The soreness disappears in a few days.

You may resume your normal diet. Start with more bland foods and gradually add in more regular foods once you feel ready.

Pain medication (especially opioids such as hydrocodone) along with surgery on your abdomen can cause constipation. Take a stool softener twice a day and try to eat foods with lots of fiber. If you are still having trouble with bowel movements, you may need to add a laxative or glycerin suppository to help.

HEALING

You can expect a mild amount of swelling and bruising that will be most noticeable 2-3 days after surgery and will improve from there. It is important to keep your head elevated- sleep in a recliner or on several pillows to help prevent swelling. If you have extensive swelling that is painful, marked bruising, or new areas of swelling that are limited to one side, call us right away.

The early swelling may be improved with ice packs. Use these for 15 minutes at a time and do not put ice directly to the skin as some areas may be numb and you can damage your skin.

The swelling and bruising usually resolves with 2-3 weeks of surgery but you may see continued improvement up to 6 weeks after surgery. You will see the final result around 6 months after surgery.

You may experience tightness in the neck and difficulty turning side to side for 1-2 months. Your skin may feel dry and rough for several months- use a gentle moisturizer to help with this.

Occasionally there are small areas of skin that do not heal as quickly (this is usually behind the ear). If this happens, we will have you apply antibiotic cream to the area until it resolves.

Make sure you are wearing a protective hat and sunscreen (SPF 30 or more) at all times when you are in the sun for the first year after surgery. Your scars are very sensitive to heat and sun and can have permanent pigment changes (usually darkening) if they are unprotected.