



ALFORD ENT AND  
FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY  
6560 Fannin Street, Suite 704  
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## **Endoscopic Brow Lift Surgery**

Our goal is for you to have the most successful surgical outcome; therefore, we provide these instructions based on Dr. Alford's experience performing many Forehead/Brow Lift surgeries. Please attempt to follow these instructions faithfully; those that do so, generally have the smoothest postoperative course.

### **Swelling, Numbness And Discoloration**

Every operation, no matter how minor, is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues, perhaps, even your eyes and checks. The swelling is usually greatest on the second or third day after your operation. We suggest that you keep your head elevated as much as possible. The swelling itself is normal and is not an indication that something is wrong with the healing phase of your operation. Rarely bruising around the eyes ("black eyes") may develop. This is uncommon and will slow your recovery, but will not effect the ultimate outcome.

You may experience some temporary numbness and/or discomfort of the head and scalp. Numbness occurs in only a small percentile of patients having endoscopic forehead/browlift. If numbness does occur, the sensation usually last only 4-6 weeks but may take up to six months to fully disappear. Numbness on the top of your scalp may be replaced by itching as the nerves heal.

Some discoloration/bruising may be present. This is a normal condition resulting from the surgery and will dissipate within several days. Remember that swelling, numbness and discoloration always subside.

Some tips to speed your recovery include:

- **STAYING VERTICAL IMPORTANT!** Sit, stand and walk around as much as is comfortable beginning on your second postoperative day. Of course, you should rest when you become tired but keep your upper body as upright as possible.
- **AVOID BENDING OVER OR LIFTING** heavy things for one week. In addition to aggravating swelling, bending and lifting may elevate blood pressure and start bleeding.
- **AVOID HITTING OR BUMPING YOUR FACE AND BROW AREA.** It is wise not to pick up small children and you should sleep alone for one week after your operation.
- **SLEEP WITH THE HEAD OF THE BED ELEVATED** for 1-2 weeks following your surgery. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of the mattress.
- **AVOID STRAINING DURING ELIMINATION.** If you need a laxative, we recommend Miralax™ (available without a prescription at any pharmacy). Proper diet, plenty of water and walking are strongly recommended to avoid constipation.
- **DO NOT SMOKE & AVOID ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** for 3 weeks. Both of these activities significantly slow the healing process.
- **AVOID SUN EXPOSURE** for 3 months – wear a hat outside.

**Elevate Head Of Bed**

To help minimize swelling, the head of the bed should be elevated 30-40 degrees both while you are in the hospital or surgery center and for 7 days following your return home.

**Pain**

Almost every patient experiences some nausea and headache for 24-36 hours following this procedure. Patients tell us that the feeling is akin to wearing a hat or cap which is too small. This sensation is a result of post-surgical swelling and its affect on nerves called J-receptors. These J-receptors in the scalp will “reset” their baseline about 24 hours after surgery, allowing your headache and nausea to subside.

We recommend taking the prescribed pain medication for the first 24-36 hours after surgery to minimize these symptoms and allow you to rest comfortably. By the second postoperative day, most patients feel ready to start moving about and can begin to decrease the amount of prescription-strength pain relievers. Cold compresses (see “Frozen Pea Packs”) and Extra Strength Tylenol ® may be sufficient for pain relief by the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> post operative day.

**Antibiotics**

You will take an oral antibiotic for 7 to 14 days following your surgery. All antibiotics should be taken according to the directions given by the pharmacy, with food or liquids to prevent nausea and promote proper absorption of the medication (do not consume milk or dairy products when taking your antibiotic as they may inactivate many medicines). Take the full course of this antibiotic as instructed by your physician. Please do not stop taking it because you “feel better” as this may cause unwanted bacterial resistance.

**Nausea**

You will be given a prescription medication, Zofran, to take if you develop any nausea. This is an orally disintegrating tablet that is quickly absorbed when placed under the tongue.

**Frozen Pea Packs**

Frozen English peas (from your grocer), placed in ZipLock ® bags, provide the simplest and most effective cold compresses to reduce swelling, bruising, and discomfort following surgery. During your waking hours, apply the pea packs to your eyes and forehead area 20-30 minutes each hour for at least 48-hours following surgery. You may continue to use the frozen pea packs as much as you like for up to 7 days after your surgery.

**Bleeding**

If bleeding or a sudden painful swelling should occur, go to bed, elevate your head, apply frozen pea pack compresses to your forehead, and call us immediately.

**Temperature**

A low grade temperate up to 100°F may be expected following surgery as the body is healing. If you have a persistent temperature 101.5 degrees or greater that is not relieved by Tylenol®, please call Dr. Alford’s office.

**Weakness**

It is not unusual for a patient to feel weak, break out in “cold sweats,” or get dizzy following the administration of anesthesia or any type of surgical procedure. Within a few days these feelings will generally disappear without medication.

### **Thinning Of The Hair**

There may be transient thinning of the hair along the short incisions in the hairline. It is normal to have a small amount of hair loss that regrows in time – be patient. In rare cases, the hair loss is permanent. If this should occur, such procedures as excision of scar tissue or placement of hair grafts can be done at a future date.

### **Resuming Activities**

1. **WEARING GLASSES AND CONTACT LENSES.** Eyeglasses may be worn as soon as the bandages are removed. Contact lenses may be inserted the day after surgery (if no eyelid surgery was performed in conjunction with the forehead/browlift). If eyelid surgery was performed, do not wear contact lenses until Dr. Alford tells you that it is safe to do so.
2. **HAIR AND BODY CARE.** Your hair will have some tangles after the surgery. Please be patient and do not attempt to force a comb or brush through it. You may wash your hair with Neutrogena™ or baby shampoo and tepid water in a shower and comb it out with a large-toothed comb or soft brush (staying away from the suture line) 2 days following surgery. After a shower or bath, carefully dry **any wetness** around the short incisions and apply a topical antibiotic cream. You may use a blow dryer on **cold setting only**. You may have your hair washed at a salon after your suture/staple removal (usually at the 1 or 2 week post of appointment), but do not sit under a hair dryer – use a hand blow dryer on cold setting. Hair coloring should be delayed until six weeks after your surgery.
3. **HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES.** On your second postoperative day, you are encouraged to be up and around the house with your usual activities except those specifically outlined previously (no bending, no heavy lifting, etc.). No strenuous activity.
4. **PULLOVER CLOTHING.** For 1 week following surgery, you should wear clothing that fastens either in the front or at the back rather than the type that must be pulled over the head.
5. **ATHLETICS.** No swimming, strenuous athletic activity or exercises that involve turning the head for 4 weeks.
6. **RETURNING TO WORK AND RESUMING SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.** When you return to work depends on the amount of physical activity and public contact involved and also the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop; the average person is ready to return to work and go out socially 7-10 days following an endoscopic forehead/browlift. (If other procedures are performed in conjunction with your browlift, your return to work may be delayed according the recovery time).
7. **DO NOT DRIVE A CAR** for two weeks. Also, do not drive while taking any sedative or prescription pain medications.

### **Scars**

You should have no visible scarring following endoscopic forehead/browlift, due to the fact that surgery entails only 5 short (1/2") incisions, placed behind the hairline.

## Daily Care

1. Do not disturb stapled incisions. These staples will be removed in 1-2 weeks at your post operative appointment.
2. Report any excessive bleeding that persists after applying pressure for 20 minutes.
3. Report any signs of infection such as excessive swelling, redness or drainage, or persistent temperature above 101.5 degrees that does not respond to Tylenol ®.
4. Never wash your hair the day of suture/staple removal. Wash it the following day, using Neutrogena™ or baby shampoo only.

## Your First Postoperative Office Visit

On the occasion of your first postoperative visit to Dr. Alford's office, a few of the staples may be removed and the progress of your healing will be checked. Removing sutures/staples is quick and uncomplicated because it is done with small delicate instruments to minimize discomfort. Ordinarily, all sutures/staples are removed within two weeks from the day of your surgery. During the interim, do not disturb sutures/staples yourself. Occasionally, crusts will develop around the sutures; these should be softened or dissolved by application of hydrogen peroxide on a Q-Tip ®.

### Reminders:

- When the bandages are first removed, your face will appear swollen and there will be varying amounts of discoloration. This swelling will subside to a very large extent within two weeks.
- The discoloration, if it appears, will gradually disappear over a period of 7-10 days, in most cases.
- Call Dr. Alford's office if you experience:
  - a persistent temperature above 101.5 degrees that is not relieved by Tylenol ®
  - sudden swelling or discoloration
  - bleeding
  - discharge from the wound or other evidence of infection
  - development of any drug reaction

It is of utmost importance that you take care of yourself and be patient during the healing process. It is our pleasure to care for you and we welcome all questions, so please feel free to call Dr. Alford's office: **713-532-3223**.