

# AUSTIN-WESTON CENTER FOR COSMETIC SURGERY

## POST OPERATIVE CARE

### **WHEN TO CALL 911:**

911 should be notified anytime you feel the situation is an EMERGENCY. EMERGENCY situations may include unexpected chest pain or tightness, difficulty breathing or tightness/swelling of the throat.

### **When to call the EMERGENCY on call nurse at 703-402-6541:**

Urgent situations that are not life threatening can be addressed by the emergency on call nurse. Some examples of these occurrences may be fainting episodes, adverse reactions to medications, elevated blood pressure, or suspicion of a hematoma. It is normal to have unsymmetrical swelling or bruising. What is not normal is a new increase in pain or pressure in a surgical area, which was not there shortly after surgery accompanied by an obvious difference in size. The patient should stop eating or drinking until they speak to the on call nurse.

For general questions that are not addressed in Most Frequent Questions and Comments please call the Austin-Weston Center at 703-790-3450 Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to speak with a member of the medical department.

### **Most Frequent Questions and Comments:**

#### **1. How does the pain pump work and why is it leaking?**

The pain pump administers numbing medication automatically as long as the white clamps on the tubing are open. The round "pump" that contains the medication may not decrease in size, however it is still working. There may be some leaking from around the catheters. If necessary, place a gauze or band-aid on this area and hold pressure for 5 minutes.

#### **2. Is the patient allowed to eat and if so, what?**

The patient is allowed to eat after surgery if he/she is hungry. It is best to start with light foods such as yogurt, Jell-O, crackers, or soup.

### **3. Should I wake up the patient to give them the medication?**

No. Generally the patient is well hydrated because of intravenous administration throughout surgery; therefore they will get up frequently to use the restroom. When they get up to use the restroom give them their medication.

### **4. What to do if the patient is nauseous?**

The best thing to do is lie the patient flat. If this doesn't work, try the prescribed medication-usually a Phenergan suppository.

### **5. The patient is constipated. What can be done?**

Make sure that there is fiber in their diet. If the patient is constipated they should insert a Dulcolax suppository, walk around and drink plenty of fluids. If the suppository does not relieve the constipation, a fleet's enema should be given. A patient is not expected to have a bowel movement the evening of surgery or even the day after, but we expect resumption of normal bowel habits a few days after surgery.

### **6. The patient has gas what can be done about it?**

Avoid drinking carbonated drinks and take Gas X. Walking is also helpful.

### **7. The patient has a slight fever what should be done?**

It is normal to experience an elevated temperature the first 2-3 days after surgery. The patient can take a fever reducer such as Tylenol to help decrease the temperature. Unless the temperature is higher than 101.4, there is no reason to be alarmed. This may also be an indication that they are not taking deep breaths. Please instruct them to take deep breaths and cough periodically during the day. If an incentive Spirometer was given, please use it as instructed. A higher fever and increasing redness or pain at an incision site a few days after surgery may be a sign of infection.

### **8. The patient is light headed.**

This may be an indication that the patient is moving too quickly or is dehydrated. Please remind the patient to move slowly when sitting up or getting up. Also increase fluid intake with juice or Gatorade.

## **9. The patient had liposuction and is leaking and it looks like blood.**

It is a normal process that your body goes through after having liposuction. It's the way your body rids itself of the solution that is injected during surgery. It is red because it mixes with a small amount of blood. The leaking usually slows down or stops by the next day.

## **10. Are we supposed to do anything with the dressings or garments?**

Following surgery, try to leave everything in place, but remove the ace wraps over the eyes to eat, go to the bathroom, and to return to the office the day after surgery. Never walk around blindfolded.

## **11. Is the patient allowed to take the pain medication and sleeping aide together?**

No. Do not give sleeping medication the first night after surgery. It is normal not to have a full night's sleep after surgery due to narcotics and medically induced sleep (anesthesia) during surgery. The sleep cycle corrects itself but generally takes a couple of days.

## **12. How long does the swelling and bruising last?**

Swelling and bruising is to be expected after surgery. It usually lasts for weeks, but may last for months. Because each person's body heals at different rates, there is no specific time frame. This is a temporary phase that will continue to improve with time.

## **13. I had surgery on my abdomen, why is my scrotum/labia all bruised and swollen?**

Gravity pulls the swelling down and it collects in these areas. It will subside in a few days.

## **14. Can I use ice on the surgical site?**

Ice compressions are used for eyes only; however do not place the ice directly on the skin. A gauze barrier is acceptable. Do not leave the ice compression on a single site for longer than 20-30 minutes.

## **15. Why is there blood in the white part of my eye and what is that jelly-like substance?**

It is normal to have bruises in the eyes after eyelid surgery or rhinoplasty. The jelly-like substance is swelling that usually resolves within 2-3 weeks.

## **16. It's all red and itchy around the tapes, what is happening?**

Most likely it is a reaction to the tapes. It is okay to remove tapes by wetting them with soap or soaking them with baby oil. Application of hydrocortisone to the site will help alleviate the irritation to the skin. Please call the office during business hours and speak with a nurse should you have any questions. In addition you may also take Benadryl 25mg orally. Please be aware that the rash may get worse before it gets better which could take a couple of days.

## **17. How do I change eyelid dressings?**

When you get home, remove the ace wraps and gauze from your eyes. Apply the following on the eyes in this order: (1) one 4" X 4" gauze moistened with cool water; (2) one 4" X 4" dry gauze on each eye; (3) small ziplock bag with either crushed ice or frozen peas on each eye; (4) re-wrap the eyes with ace wrap. This should be done for 20 - 30 minutes every 2 hours until bedtime. The ace wrap does not have to be worn when you return to the Center the next day.