



## Post-Surgery Instructions

### General Instructions

An adult should stay with you for at least the first 24 hours after surgery. You should rest with your head elevated with at least 2 pillows for the first 24 hours after surgery. You should restrict your activity for at least a week after surgery. Avoid bending at the waist or picking up heavy objects. Typically, you can return to work 2 weeks after the surgery. You may have to wear camouflage make-up.

It is not unusual for you to have a sore throat for 24-48 hours after surgery. Your pain medication should help control this discomfort. Throat lozenges may help.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages, smoke, drive a car, or sign legal documents for 24 hours after surgery.

It is best to take your pain medication before pain is experienced. It is easier to prevent pain than control it. If the pain medication causes nausea, take a few teaspoonfuls of vanilla ice cream, then take your pain medication with a full glass of water, then eat a half-cup of vanilla ice cream.

Mild bleeding from the surgical site is not unusual. Mild pressure usually will control the bleeding. If bleeding persists or is heavy, contact us immediately.

Cold tends to prevent swelling. We recommend cold packs immediately after surgery and the day following surgery. This is especially important for eyelid surgery. After 48 hours after surgery, warm (not hot) packs may be beneficial. Avoid excess heat on skin that has reduced sensation following surgery. Cold or heat over dressings will not be helpful.

Swelling or bruising is a normal sequel to surgery and should be expected. Resolution of swelling and bruising takes time and may not be complete for several weeks to a few months depending on the type of surgery and the individual patient. Bruising can be covered with camouflage make-up.

### **Incisions:**

Exposed sutured or stapled skin incisions should be gently washed with soap and water three times per day. After drying, the incisions should be cleaned with 3% Hydrogen Peroxide and a Q-tip. The incisions should then be constantly covered with the antibiotic ointment dispensed to you. Incisions should not be allowed to become dry or crust over.

## **Post-Surgery Instructions, Cont.**

Some skin incisions are reapproximated with Dermabond (tissue glue). You may wash over the Dermabond, but gently pat dry. Do not put ointment over the Dermabond. If the Dermabond has not peeled away from your incision by the 10<sup>th</sup> day after surgery, you may peel it off.

Sutures may be self-absorbing and will disappear after a few days if kept moist with ointment. Other sutures must be removed. We typically remove these 3-5 days after surgery.

Care of staples is the same as for sutures. Staples are removed in 8-12 days after the surgery.

Beginning 6 weeks after surgery, application and gentle massage with ointment, cocoa butter or Mederma (over-the-counter) may help to promote a softer inconspicuous scar.

Incisions normally will be red for several months but will gradually fade. Incisions can usually be covered with make-up 10 days after surgery.

Incisions should not be exposed to direct sunlight for 6 months after surgery to avoid hyperpigmentation or hypervascularity to the incision.

### **Dressings:**

Different surgical procedures require special dressings and some require none. Do not remove dressings unless specifically instructed to do so. Some dressings are removed the day following surgery and some remain in place for a significant period of time.

### **Diet:**

Start with clear liquids, then advance to soup and crackers when able, then resume your regular diet.