

Scott P. Bartlett, M.D.

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

Before and After your Facelift Instructions

Before your facelift:

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery.
- Do not wear make-up the day of surgery.
- You may wash your hair normally the night before surgery. If you color your hair plan to do it the week **before** surgery, as you may not be able to have it colored for at least 4 weeks after surgery.
- Bring a scarf or head covering and dark glasses for the trip home.
- Wear something that buttons or zips, not something you need to pull over your head like a turtleneck or t-shirt.
- Make arrangements for somebody to accompany you to the hospital or to the hotel and to stay with you. You are not permitted to drive. If a friend or family member is not available, let us know in advance and we will refer you to the private duty nursing agency.
- You will see the Physician 1 week from the date of surgery for a followup and suture removal. You may want to schedule this appointment before surgery.

After your facelift:

- Before you leave the hospital or the hotel after your one night stay, the bandages will be removed (the morning after surgery). Expect to have bruising, swelling and discomfort.
- The pain medication will help so don't hesitate to take it. It is normal for the medication to make you feel drowsy and it may also cause constipation.
- Also remember to take your antibiotic as prescribed.
- At home elevate your head on at least 2 pillows when resting or sleeping.
- You may start showering and washing your hair the day after surgery. However, because you will have numbness in the face and earlobes, **DO NOT** use hot rollers, curling iron or a hair dryer. If you must dry your hair set it on the cool setting. Do not color or perm your hair for at least 4 weeks after surgery.
- You may wash your face with a gentle antibacterial soap (Dial) and water. Do not use any harsh cleansers.
- You must apply a triple/double antibiotic ointment (Neosporin) to the incision sites along your hairline and ear to help prevent an infection.
- For men, the beard growing skin on the upper neck is now behind the ears. You will need to shave behind your ears. Because this area is numb, use an electric razor to avoid injury.
- **Do Not Smoke for three weeks following surgery.** This is very important for healing.
- **What to Expect:** After facial surgery, you will have areas of numbness and a feeling of tightness in your face. These feelings will go away gradually. If you had more extensive work in your neck you may find it difficult to swallow or move your mouth for a few days. When you have a facelift, the surgeons tighten your neck muscles, which sometimes cause, what patient's

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call, a “tight band” around your neck. This feeling also diminishes with time. Lumps and bumps are not uncommon. It may be months before they smooth out and disappear. Feeling tired is a common side effect after general anesthesia so you should plan a less active schedule and rest.

- Eat a light diet, and avoid foods that are difficult to chew especially for the first few days after surgery. Eat only soft foods during this time. You may drink a nutritional supplement like ensure to avoid chewing. Use mouth rinses after each meal if unable to use a toothbrush.
- Be sure to drink plenty of water. It will help with healing and relieving some of the swelling. You should drink about 2 liters a day.
- You may cover your bruises on your face with makeup, just be careful NOT to get it near the incision sites and sutures. Make sure you remove all of your makeup at the end of the day.
- Strenuous activities like aerobics, tennis, heavy lifting (even children) are **strictly forbidden** for 3 weeks.
- After 3-4 weeks you may begin to slowly increase your activity but it may be up to 6 weeks before your energy level returns to normal. Pace yourself and allow for periods of rest throughout the day.
- When you do return to work, consider working only a half day, if possible.

Signs and Symptoms to Report to the Doctor: Please call the office if any of the following occur. If it is over the weekend, please call 215-662-4000 and ask for the plastic surgery resident on-call.

- Temperature above 100F, chills
- Excessive/ continuous drainage from the incision sites
- Separation of the sutures or incision sites or red streaks extending from the incision sites
- Sudden Excessive/ Increase in pain and swelling, redness