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FACELIFT/NECK LIFT AFTER-CARE INSTRUCTIONS

INTRO:

Congratulations on your decision to get a facelift/neck lift. These after-care instructions, along with our office staff, will help guide you through your recovery process. It is crucial that you and your caretakers **read through these instructions both BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY**.

HAVE CARETAKER WITH YOU:

- Following surgery, have an adult caretaker stay with you for the first 24-48 hours. You will be drowsy from the anesthesia and will not be able to drive for at least 24 hours.

WALKING:

- It is imperative to get out of bed early, and often (with assistance) following surgery to prevent postoperative problems such as blood clots. A reasonable goal would be to go for a 15-minute walk 5-6 times per day or to get up every hour to walk to the restroom. This will help reduce the risk of blood clots developing by encouraging blood flow throughout your legs.
- If you are sitting or lying down, move your ankles up and down and in a circular motion a couple times each hour to help increase blood flow.
- If you have shortness of breath, leg swelling, and/or leg pain at any point in your postoperative healing, go to an emergency department immediately (or call 911). This could possibly be a blood clot.

COMPRESSION GARMENTS:

- The day after surgery your initial bulky head dressing and drains are removed. A new dressing will be applied which is lighter and smaller than the previous one.
- You will be giving a chin strap to wear after your first shampoo.
- The chin compression garment should be worn for 24 hours a day for the first 7 days. Then only at night from day 7- 14. This significantly reduces swelling as it supports swollen cheek/neck areas.
- Please leave the compression stockings on for 5 days, 24 hours a day, after surgery. They may be removed for showering, but then must be put back on. You can also purchase additional compression socks (from Amazon or Target) if the ones from surgery get soiled.
- Compression stockings help reduce the risk of blood clots.

SHOWERING:

- Three days after surgery, the second head dressing can be removed, discarded, and you can gently wash your hair (If staying at an after-care facility for a second night, a nurse may wash your hair on the second day).
- Keep the sutures clean by lathering soap in small, gentle circles to remove crust, dry blood, and ointment.
- After showering, do NOT use a blow dryer to dry hair, as you can easily burn areas that may be numb.
- After hair is dry, apply the chinstrap as shown on the package.

GROOMING:

- You may blow dry your hair on a COOL setting.
- No hairspray, conditioners or gels while stitches are in place.
- Keep moisturizer on face away from stitches.
- You may wear cosmetics on your face 10 days after surgery.
- Wait 3 weeks to color your hair after surgery.
- Wait 3 weeks before wearing pull-over clothing or hairpieces so they do not disrupt hairline or earlobe incisions.
- Wear sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection (even on cloudy days) for 8 weeks after surgery. Your skin is extremely sensitive to daylight during the healing process.

PAIN AND PAIN MEDICATION:

- Take pain medication with food.
- Vicodin (Hydrocodone + Acetaminophen) or Percocet (Oxycodone + Acetaminophen) should be taken as directed:
 - Mild to moderate pain: 1 tablet every 4-6 hours
 - Severe pain: 2 tablets every 4-6 hours
- If your pain is mild, you may opt to take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 1000 mg every 8 hours (which is 2 tablets of the Extra Strength Tylenol purchased over-the-counter).
- Take a stool softener, such as Colace, while taking pain medication to help prevent constipation.
- DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION.
- DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.
- Take pain medication only if needed. The quicker you can wean off the pain medications, the better you will feel and heal.

SUPPLEMENTS:

- Do not take aspirin (or products containing aspirin) for 10 days after surgery
- Do not take herbal supplements (vitamin E, fish oil, hormone replacements) for 10 days after surgery.
- Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after surgery, since they increase heart rate and blood pressure which could interfere with your recovery.

DO NOT SMOKE:

- This is very important because smoking (tobacco, marijuana, or vapes) can result in a lack of blood supply to the tissues and fat, causing the tissue to die or delayed healing.
- Smoking can resume 4 weeks after surgery as long as there are no other complications present.

POSITIONING/SLEEPING:

- Sleep on your back, with your head elevated at a 45° angle for two weeks after surgery. This will also help minimize swelling to your eyes.
- It is common for your hands and feet to swell the first couple weeks after surgery. To reduce swelling, it helps to elevate your arms and legs with pillows when you are lying or sitting.
- Use covered ice bags (no direct contact with skin) on exposed areas of your face for the first 48 hours to help reduce swelling.

LUNG EXERCISES:

- You will be given a spirometer to help increase volume in your lungs to prevent atelectasis, or collapsed lungs, which can be a result of anesthesia and the physical stress your body is going through. It is best to take 10 breaths per hour with the spirometer for the first 72 hours.
- Remaining hydrated (64 oz of water per day) and regular walks will also help to prevent these occurrences.

DIET:

- A light diet is best after surgery. Start with liquids and progress to soft foods like soups and Jell-O.
- Stay on a soft diet with high protein for 2-3 days following surgery. Avoid spicy foods, sugar-free sweeteners and carbonated drinks to reduce gas, bloating and nausea.

ACTIVITIES:

- Refrain from raising blood pressure for three weeks after surgery to prevent bleeding.
 - No hot baths, showers, spas for the first three weeks.
- Cardio exercise, swimming, and inactive sexual activities may resume 4 weeks following surgery
- Do not bend over with your head to the ground for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Avoid straining of any kind for the first week. Avoid turning your head from side-to-side (move your whole body to turn).
- Facial movements should be kept to a minimum the first week to avoid internal bleeding (e.g., chewing, smiling, talking, yawning)
- Do not lift anything over 10 lbs. for 6 weeks (a gallon of milk weighs approximately 8.5 lbs.)

DRAINS:

- Drains are used on a case-by-case basis.
- If drains were placed, please keep a schedule and record the amount of drainage over a 24-hour period.
- Depending on how much drainage you have, you can empty the drains 3 times a day (every 8 hours) or twice a day (every 12 hours).
- After emptying drains, use a Q-tip to apply Neosporin or Bacitracin once or twice a day to where the tube enters the skin.
- It is normal for the drain sites to “leak” fluid at first, and you can put sterile surgical pads to collect extra fluid. It is normal to see “clots” of blood in the drains.
- It is normal to have one drain site to sting or be sorer than the other one.
- You will see more drainage if you overdo activities.
- The drains can be removed when the drainage is 25 cc or less in 24 hours (usually occurs in 1-2 days).

SUTURES/SCAR TREATMENT:

- The sutures will be removed at your around your one-week follow-up appointment (depending on how you are healing).
- Keep the incisions clean and dry.
- Avoid direct sun light on incisions for 6 months. Use a liberal amount of sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection on the sutures for at least 6 months. Hats and sunglasses are also helpful.
- At 4 weeks, you can begin using silicone scar patches from the drugstore, or Silagen[®] Scar Refinement System that we sell in the office on incision sites. Silagen[®] will help flatten and soften scars and reduce redness, itching, and pain on incisions.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Swelling is mostly resolved within two to three weeks, but some swelling will persist to a slight degree for several months. To a large extent, only you will notice the swelling.
- Bruising is usually localized to the area immediately beneath the eyes and the area on either side of the neck. It is usually gone within one week but on occasion may persist longer. Areas begin to discolor, and skin has a slight yellow/brown tinge that travels to the neck area.
- Your face and/or neck might have a tight feeling sensation (but will look natural). The tightness and numbness sensation are normal and will gradually disappear over time.
- The incisions will be very sensitive to sunlight, so avoid direct sun to the sutures.
- Depending on the degree of surgery, most patients are quite “presentable” 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- It is not unusual for a patient to experience a day or two of “blues” one to three weeks after surgery. After the initial excitement of the operation has worn off, but before you look as good as you would like to be this mild depression might be experienced. This is not unusual and is no cause for alarm as it should pass quickly.
- It will take 6 months to see final results. It is common to see asymmetry, day-to-day swelling changes, creasing along incision line, and numbness from nerve regrowth until you are fully healed.

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:

- Every patient heals at different rates, but you will be seen several times for post-op appointments. Typically, they are scheduled for day one, 1 week, 2-3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months after surgery.
- The purpose of these appointments is to check your healing progress.
- Please call to schedule your appointments. The Beverly Hills office phone number is (310) 273-1001 and the Santa Barbara office phone number is (805) 898-9299.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:

- If you have questions or concerns regarding your procedure please email assistant@drbrent.com or email Dr. Brent Moelleken at drbrent@drbrent.com
- Please call the office at (310) 273-1001 if you have increased pain at surgical incision sites, redness, sudden swelling, warmth, pus, drainage, or a fever greater than 101.5°F.
- Please visit an emergency room or call 911 if you have shortness of breath or leg swelling with pain to rule out a pulmonary embolism or blood clot which could be deadly if left untreated.

HELPFUL ITEMS TO PURCHASE BEFORE SURGERY:

- ___ Stool Softener (i.e. Colace)
- ___ Non-stick pads (absorbs fluid that might seep from incisions)
- ___ Cold and warm compresses (controls swelling in post-operative period)
- ___ Arnica pills (oral herbal supplement to help with bruising)
- ___ Neck pillow (to keep face and neck in a sturdy, supported position)
- ___ Thermometer (monitor your temperature after surgery and make sure it stays below 101.5°F)

ADDITIONAL POST-OP NOTES:
