



## **Post-Operative Care and Instructions for Rhinoplasty**

The following instructions will answer many of the questions that may arise after your surgery. You and your family should read them several times so that you become familiar with them. Please follow these instructions faithfully; those who do so have the smoothest postoperative course and more satisfactory results.

### **SWELLING**

Any operation is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues. The amount varies from person to person, but it always seems more prominent in the face. Swelling may be more noticeable after the first post-operative day and usually progresses for the first few days after surgery. It may be more pronounced along the jaw line, and is generally most noticeable in the morning after you first wake up. This swelling is normal. It is not serious and is to be expected after your surgery.

The main thing to remember is that swelling eventually subsides. You can help decrease the swelling in the following ways:

1. Sit, stand, and walk as much as you can after you leave the hospital. Staying in an upright position can decrease the tendency for swelling.
2. It is always a good idea not to use your back when lifting heavy objects. For at least a week after surgery, bend at your knees, not at your waist, to lift light objects that are below waist level. If an object is in the least bit heavy, ask a family member to lift and carry it for you.
3. For your own comfort and to aid the healing process, be especially careful not to bump your face and neck.
4. Sleep with the head of your bed elevated for one week after your surgery. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under your head. Sleeping on your face tends to tear down the supporting stitches used under the skin. Therefore, it is necessary to sleep on your back for 3-4 weeks. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45 degree angle to be more comfortable.
5. You can continue to use ice compresses in the exposed areas of your face such as you were using at the hospital. They may help with the discoloration and swelling, as well as minor discomfort, for a few days after you leave the hospital. Apply ice compress for 20 minutes every 2 hours as needed for comfort and to decrease swelling.
6. Avoid straining during bowel movements. If you need a laxative, your pharmacist can suggest an over the counter preparation.
7. Protect your face from the sun with a sunscreen for at least one month. It is always a good idea to wear sunscreen to keep harmful rays from intensifying the aging process.
8. Remember - report any sudden increase in swelling, pain or bleeding to our office.

### **DISCOLORATION**

It is not unusual to have varying amounts of discoloration about the face. Like swelling, it may become more pronounced, especially in the neck, after the first day or so. Remember, this is temporary. It usually lasts no more than two weeks, and it decreases in intensity all the time.

The instructions given for decreasing swelling will also help the discoloration; however, there is no medication that will cause it to disappear rapidly. You can camouflage the discoloration to some extent by using makeup, and a concealer used around the eyes can help cover bruises. **DO NOT APPLY MAKEUP OVER THE INCISIONS UNTIL**



SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE SUTURES HAVE BEEN REMOVED. You can apply makeup within 1/4" of the incision lines, however.

#### DISCOMFORT

You can take the pain medication, which we will have prescribed for you. Under NO circumstances should you take any medicines containing aspirin or salicylates for at least a week after surgery. Be sure to check the labels of any pain medication you have, or that you purchase from the drug store.

If you have a sudden onset of pain or a feeling of tightness around the incisions, especially if it is particularly strong on one side, call the office.

#### OOZING

If you notice bright red oozing coming through the bandages, go to bed, elevate your head, apply ice compresses to your face and neck. Oozing is normal, especially for the first few days after surgery.

#### TEMPERATURE

Generally, your temperature will not rise very much above 100 degrees after your surgery; this rise is due to the healing process. It is common to feel that your temperature is increased after surgery, but this is usually not the case. To be sure, you should measure your temperature by mouth. Report any persistent temperature above 101.5 degrees to the office.

#### WEAKNESS

It is not unusual after you have had an anesthetic or any type of operation to feel weak, have palpitations, break out in cold sweats", or feel dizzy. This gradually clears up after a few days without medication.

#### DEPRESSION

It is not unusual for you to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery. No matter how much you wanted the operation, the post-operative swelling and bruising can be disappointing. Be patient. The bruising and swelling will subside quickly, and your surgical result will be evident in time.

#### NUMBNESS

Parts of the face, neck, nose and ears will sometimes feel weak or numb after a surgery. This is usually temporary, and will gradually go away.

#### MEDICATIONS

As we mentioned before, a prescription for pain has been prescribed. Take these only if you feel you need them. Take ALL of your antibiotics until you run out.

After we remove your dressing, you should clean the incisions with hydrogen peroxide two or three times a day. You should then apply the antibiotic ointment we prescribed for you with a Q-tip to the incisions. Keep the incisions thoroughly covered with the ointment until we tell you to stop using it.



## INCISIONS

After all your stitches have been removed, the incisions will be a deep pink. There will be varying amounts of swelling in and around the incisions themselves. With time, the pink will become white, and the firmness of the scars will soften, making them less noticeable. Everyone heals at a different rate, but it takes approximately one year for all the changes to occur. Avoid direct sunlight to the incision for 6 weeks, this optimizes scar camouflage.

## NOSE CAST

If you have a nose cast, try not to disrupt it. Do not get it wet. IF the cast falls off do not attempt to put it back on. Leave it in place until the doctors removes it.

## RESUMING ACTIVITIES

1. **GLASSES AND CONTACT LENSES** - Eye glasses may be worn as soon as bandages are removed. Contact lenses may be inserted the day after surgery.
2. **HAIR AND BODY CARE** – If you have a scalp incision, **DO NOT WASH** your hair until 48 hours after suture and/or staple removal.
  - a. You can use cotton balls to wash your face gently after the first week. Use a mild soap and wash with a gentle, upward motion.
  - b. You can take a shower by the fourth post-operative day, but do not take a shower the day after you have sutures removed.
  - c. Do **NOT** tweeze eyebrows for one week after your surgery.
3. **HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES** - You can be up and around with your usual activities, except for lifting heavy objects. Do **NOT** lift anything over 25 pounds.
4. **CLOTHING** - For one week after surgery, wear clothing that doesn't have to be pulled over your head.
5. **ATHLETICS** - For six weeks after your surgery, do not swim, perform any kind of strenuous athletic activity, or perform any exercises that involve turning the head.
6. **TRY TO LIMIT FACIAL MOVEMENTS** - To achieve this, you should do the following.

Avoid excessive smiling.

Do **NOT** bend your head forward or backward for two weeks.

Avoid gum and foods that are hard to chew. Easily chewed foods such as soup, mashed potatoes, stewed chicken, and hamburger are allowed. Stay away from steaks, French bread and other hard to chew foods for at least one week.

Avoid yawning with your mouth opened widely for at least one week.

Most of all, be **PATIENT** during the healing process. The results will be worth the wait. If you have any further questions. Please do not hesitate to call.