

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR EYELID SURGERY (BLEPHAROPLASTY)

The following instructions pertain specifically to blepharoplasty or eyelid surgery.

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## **WHAT TO EXPECT POSTOPERATIVELY:**

It is important that you are prepared for your postoperative recovery period after eyelid surgery. The day of surgery, for instance, you might feel sleepy from the anesthesia. Most likely, you will have no discomfort due to the long-acting local anesthesia that is used. When this wears off, most patients describe some discomfort, usually around the back of the ears and neck, which is easily alleviated by analgesic pills and cool compresses. Pain requiring more than mild to moderate analgesics in pill form is extremely rare. Your face and neck may feel firm, tight, and look shiny during the swelling period. This too is quite normal and wears off gradually.

## **BLURRINESS OF VISION:**

Your vision may be slightly blurry due to swelling and protective ointment used during the surgery. This sometimes lingers for a day or two and can be expected after most extended surgical procedures.

## **SWELLING AND BRUISING:**

Mild bruising and swelling are an important part of the body's normal healing process, and are most apparent around the eyelids, earlobes, and neck. Most of this will rapidly resolve within five to seven days.

## **ASYMMETRY:**

Whenever any surgery is performed on both sides of the body, you should be prepared for some degree of temporary asymmetry. Swelling and bruising naturally occurs and resolves faster on one side of the face than the other. This is due to differences of the blood supply and lymphatic drainage.

## **WHAT TO DO AFTER SURGERY**

### **PREPARING COOL COMPRESSES:**

The use of icy cool compresses to the eye and facial areas not covered with bandages will help to resolve swelling and bruising. Soak and wring out gauze pads and place these over your eyes as much as possible while you are awake (i.e. 10 min. on & 5 min. off). ***Ice bags should never be placed directly against the skin, as the area may be numb***

**due to local anesthetic and swelling.** Frozen peas placed in a plastic bag can also be used very effectively.

#### **HOW TO RECLINE OR SLEEP:**

Sleep with your head elevated. The best way is to recline with your head elevated on two or three pillows. This should be done for the first two to three weeks after surgery to prevent swelling.

#### **EATING & DIET:**

The night after surgery you should only have clear liquids, such as Seven-Up. A normal diet can be resumed by the second or third postoperative day.

#### **SHOWERS & BATHING:**

Following your surgery, showers should not be taken for the first two to three days until your incision lines are sealed. After your incision lines are sealed, you may wash your hair and clean any crusts that may develop around the incision sites. Baths or showers should be taken using lukewarm water.

#### **THINGS TO AVOID TO MINIMIZE SWELLING AND SPEED HEALING:**

- (1) **AVOID EXCESSIVE BENDING AND HEAVY LIFTING** for at least 2 weeks to minimize swelling and avoid bleeding.
- (2) **AVOID THE SUN OR EXCESSIVE HEAT:** Do not expose your face to the sun for 4 to 6 weeks. Sunglasses will hide your eyelids from the sun.. **Saunas, and extremely hot showers** can also contribute to swelling and should be avoided for 2 to 3 months following your surgery.
- (3) **NO ASPIRIN, NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, NO CAFFEINE** for 2 weeks before and after surgery.
- (4) **"NO SMOKING"** - It can:
  - (a) Have a deleterious (harmful) effect on wound healing.
  - (b) Have a deleterious (injurious) effect on the skin and cause hair loss.
  - (c) Smokers tend to cough more and post operative coughing can increase chances of hematoma. (This will also increase the risk of tissue slough).
  - (d) Smoking will also cause increased incident of pulmonary complications.
  - (e) "Passive Smoke"; others in family or surrounding smoking can similarly adversely affect you.
- (5) **AVOID MIRRORS.** Everyone experiences a temporary surprise when viewing a slightly bruised, swollen "stranger" in the mirror. Remember that a more attractive, youthful "you" will show through in several days.

#### **MOISTURIZERS AND MAKEUP:**

To prevent dryness and itching, facial moisturizers can be used approximately 5 to 7 days after surgery. A good **moisturizer** can be applied to the skin at night. Make-up can be used to camouflage bruising, as long as it does not cover incision lines. Our office staff can suggest several skin care products.

#### **EYE CARE:**

You may experience slight tearing, itchiness or mild irritation during the first few days following surgery. If necessary, we will prescribe ointments or eye drops to help resolve these minor symptoms. Any creams or ointments used around the eyes should be water soluble. If you must use a non-water soluble facial cosmetic or skin care product, be very careful not to get the solution near your eyes.

#### **PLACEMENT AND REMOVAL OF STITCHES:**

Eyelid procedures use very fine stitches, that are placed in such a way as to minimize scarring and prevent unnecessary stitch marks from occurring. Stitches are used to support the incision site, while it heals. These stitches are removed in our office on approximately the fifth postoperative day. Some sutures are absorbable and dissolve in seven to fourteen days. Lumpiness may be found along the incision line is temporary, and resolves in time.

#### **RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITIES:**

After eyelid surgery most patients are able to return to work and social activities within 3 to 5 days. Light exercise can be resumed at 1 week. Regular exercise and workouts at the gym can usually start 2 weeks postoperatively. After starting activity, you might feel a slight "pressure sensation" in and around your eyes if you "over do it". This is your "cue" to stop and then resume the next day at a slightly lower intensity.

#### **AIR TRAVEL:**

Depending on the destination and length of travel, you may travel by air after 5 days following your surgery. You might experience some temporary swelling and a pressure sensation . This is normal and should not alarm you.

### **"INCISIONS" AND "SCARS": THE PROCESS OF HEALING**

Contrary to popular opinion, forming a "**scar**" is good, since it is the way the body heals itself. To the patient, however, the idea of scarring is unnerving. We minimize scarring by camouflaging the incision sites. Plastic surgical techniques in wound closure are more time-consuming and meticulous, so that scars become inconspicuous.

### **WHEN IS SURGERY NOT RECOMMENDED?**

Blepharoplasty is a very safe operation when performed by a competent surgeon in a

well-equipped facility. Certain uncontrolled health problems, however, such as high blood pressure, uncontrolled diabetes, or severe heart, lung, kidney, and liver disorders contraindicate elective aesthetic surgery. Also, patients on anticoagulation medication or those with serious psychiatric disorders are not good candidates. Your initial medical screening in our office and a physical examination will ensure that you have no health problems that contraindicate surgery.

## **COMPLICATIONS**

With all surgical procedures, there exists the remote possibility of complications. Complications involving eyelid surgery are unusual and rarely permanent. Most situations self-correct in time, resolving with simple treatment, or sometimes further surgery. Although we have an extremely low incidence of complications, the following is a list of the more commonly noted risks published in the surgical literature for your information:

### **(1) Hematoma:**

By avoiding aspirin and aspirin-containing products for two weeks before surgery, with normal bleeding and clotting laboratory tests, this complication is very unusual. In rare cases, an accumulation of blood would require immediate drainage would be necessary in order to remove it. In the surgical literature, there have been reported extremely rare cases of blindness following blepharoplasty. Fortunately in over 28 years of surgery, we have never experienced a serious complication following eyelid surgery.

### **(2) Poor incision healing, margin skin loss, or thick scars:**

Smoking, skin that is pulled too tight, suture reaction, or local infections can all cause poor wound healing. Although great care is taken to prevent these problems, if one were to occur, treatment would be instituted immediately and continued until healing occurs. Often, healing occurs without residual scarring. In cases where a touch-up or scar revision is necessary, it is performed six to twelve months later.

### **(3) Infection:**

Although quite rare, areas of localized suture reaction or infection can occur. These are treated with warm soaks, peroxide, systemic antibiotics, and topical application of antibiotic ointments over the incision lines. Because the blood supply is so good around the eyelids, infection is extremely rare after blepharoplasty.

We believe that the intensive, individualized attention each patient receives before, during and after surgery prevents the overall occurrence of complications.

## **A NOTE TO MY PATIENTS**

There are many details that must be considered before facelift surgery. Varying degrees

of skin elasticity, chronic conditions of the skin such as severe acne or excessive sun damage.,or other conditions may limit the amount of improvement able to be obtained. In these situations, one must have realistic goals and expectations about how much the surgery can accomplish and will be completely discussed during your consultation.