
OHSU
FACIAL PLASTIC &
RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY



Postoperative Instructions
Following Facial Surgery



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1. Your surgery will be performed in the Surgery Center on the 4th floor of the Center for Health and Healing (CHH) at Oregon Health & Science University. The procedure is done under anesthesia administered by an anesthesiologist. After surgery, you will be taken to the Post Anesthesia Recovery Unit for about one hour to allow you to recover from the effects of the anesthetic.
2. Following that, you will be brought back to your room in the Surgery Center. You will recover further until you are ready for discharge. You will need to have someone pick you up and drive you home, since you will not be able to drive yourself for 24 hours. If you live outside of the Portland Metro area, you will need to make arrangements to stay in Portland on the night of surgery. Our office staff can help you with those arrangements.
3. A mild compression bandage may be applied following facelift and browlift surgery. This is left in place for the first 24 hours. Keep ice packs around your eyes and face for the first 24 hours and sleep with your head elevated on at least two or three pillows for one week. This will minimize the amount of bruising and swelling. If necessary, other specific care instructions will be discussed prior to your discharge.
4. The compression bandage is removed one day following surgery at your first postoperative visit. Also at this visit our nurse may wash and shampoo your hair (facelift and browlift patients only). Most of the sutures used in the procedure are dissolvable and do not need to be removed. They disappear within five to seven days after surgery. Any skin clips in the hair are removed at about seven to ten days after surgery.
5. You can expect bruising and swelling to occur around the eyes and in the cheek areas following surgery. This is common and generally resolves within ten days to two weeks. After seven days, makeup can be used around the eyes and the cheek areas to cover any remaining discoloration.
6. Postoperative antibiotics are prescribed and should be taken until gone. Postoperative pain medication will be prescribed as well. You are encouraged to take the pain pills so that you remain comfortable. In general, most patients find that they need very little pain medication following surgery.
7. If eyelid surgery is performed there may be mild blurring of vision. The blurriness may last up to three to four weeks. This is the result of tightening of the eyelids which causes a temporary change in shape of the cornea. This is a situation which resolves to normal and is not permanent.
8. Some numbness and tingling may be anticipated in the forehead area if a browlift has been performed. Tingling in the cheeks will also occur after a facelift procedure. This results from lifting the skin away from the nerves that supply sensation to the area. Sensation in these areas return over time but may take six months to a year.
9. Your skin will be quite sensitive to heat and UV rays of sunlight after surgery. This sensitivity can lead to superficial “sunburns” of the face much more easily than usual. Therefore, we recommend that you avoid warm or hot packs to the face during the immediate postoperative period. In addition, be sure to always wear sun protection with an SPF of at least 15 for at least six months following your procedure.
10. During the first week after surgery, minimize any strenuous physical exertion. Avoid activities which will increase your heart rate above 100 beats per minute. Also avoid bending down from the waist and lifting anything heavier than ten pounds. Your physical exertion level may be gradually increased back up to normal one to two weeks after surgery.
11. Your face and eyes will take some time to “settle” onto their new framework until the final result is visible. This period varies from person to person but can range from several weeks to several months. Again, these are not dramatic changes but subtle shifting of tissue to achieve the final outcome. Most patients can resume their normal social activities by two weeks without any obvious evidence of having undergone facial surgery.
12. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the recovery or any other part of the surgery, please contact us at 503 494-5678.

If you need to reach a physician after business hours, please contact the OHSU operator at (503) 494-9000 and ask to have the Facial Plastic Surgery Fellow paged. There is always someone available to help you.

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