



THE NEW YORK  
AESTHETIC CONSULTANTS, LLP  
PLASTIC, LASER & DERMASURGERY

DERMASURGERY  
RON M. SHELTON, M.D., F.A.A.D.

PLASTIC SURGERY  
TED CHAGLIASSIAN, M.D., F.A.C.S.

NEW YORK OFFICE-BASED SURGERY, PLLC



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## Post-Operative Instructions Closures

Dear Patient:

With your surgery over, you are now beginning a new and important phase: your recovery. The outcome of this crucial period depends a lot on your commitment and continuing efforts to reinforce your body's natural healing powers.

All the do's and don'ts you should strictly follow are covered in the attached document. And all of them are important. For example, by resting, by halting strenuous activities, and by avoiding drugs such as aspirin and nicotine, you enhance your healing process. And by protecting your wound, you help avoid any setbacks that would force you to undergo follow-up procedures.

In short, instead of just passively waiting for your wound to heal, you can actively help it along.

So, as soon as you can – *today* – familiarize yourself with what you should be doing. And call our office if you want to discuss any of the attached recommendations in more detail.

See you at your next appointment!

Ron Shelton, M.D.

### Side-to-Side Closures and Flaps

**Your Bandage.** After the operation, the stitched wound will be covered and protected with a thin sterile piece of tape, called a Steri-Strip. This Steri-Strip helps prevent infection from entering the wound. Immediately above the Steri-Strip is a compression dressing consisting of a non-stick pad, gauze and tape. This compression dressing absorbs the normal oozing that occurs during the first 24 hours.

**Removing the Bandage.** You may remove this compression dressing the morning after the operation. Do **not** remove the Steri-Strips underneath the compression dressing. Our staff will remove the Steri-Strips when you return to have your sutures removed. There may be unsightly dried blood on the Steri-Strips; you may cover these Strips with an additional fresh layer of Steri-Strips.

**Fixing Your Steri-Strips.** If a Steri-Strip curls up at the edges, you can trim it with scissors or reinforce it by applying a new Steri-Strip over the original one. If a strip that was originally applied falls off, replace it immediately with a new one. But **never** remove an original strip yourself.

**Keeping the Bandage Dry.** Immediately after the operation do not wet your wound by showering, bathing, or icing. It will be safe to wet your wound and Steri-Strips one day after facial surgery, or two days after surgery on the body, unless we tell you otherwise.

**Understanding Reactions.** Normally, there is a small area of redness surrounding the wound — thinner than the width of a pencil eraser — that causes no pain. This redness, the usual reaction to stitches, will gradually subside. But if pain develops and intensifies — call my office.

**Emergencies.** If the wound becomes very itchy and red — and if tiny fluid-filled blisters occur — you may be developing an allergic contact dermatitis to the tape, a rare reaction. If this occurs, call my office. Also call if you experience severe pain and if your skin reddens, which may indicate an infection.

### *Post-Operative Information for All Patients*

**Emergencies.** If you experience any pain and if your skin reddens — indication of a possible infection — **call my office**. Such symptoms, which are very rare, usually don't occur during the first five days after surgery. When calling, use my regular office number: (212) 593-1818. Do not leave a message on the recording machine. Simply follow the instructions given in order to have the service page me. I will return your call as soon as possible.

**Bleeding.** If there is any bleeding, it is usually just a drop every few minutes from the edge of the dressing. You can **wipe it away** and reinforce the compression dressing. The compression dressing absorbs blood like a sponge. When you see a drop, the dressing may be saturated. And when you apply any pressure to it, more blood may be forced to seep out. Although this seeping may be alarming, it is entirely normal.

**Take It Easy.** On the day of surgery and the following day — **rest!** Also, **avoid the following physical activities** until you are permitted to do so (usually in one week, unless told otherwise).

- Do not participate in any physical activities that will cause an increase in heart rate, such as running, walking quickly, biking, tennis, etc. Light stretching exercises are permitted, as long as your head is kept above your heart.
- Do not participate in any activities that will force you to strain, such as heavy lifting, pulling, or pushing, or during a bowel movement.
- Do not bend over at the waist. If you must bend, bend at the knees with a straight back. Keep your head above your heart at all times.

**Pain.** To relieve pain after surgery, take **only Tylenol** — unless instructed otherwise — and follow the instructions on the label.

**Significant Bleeding.** You may experience significant bleeding, especially after coughing, being struck by accident, falling, straining during a bowel movement, or engaging in any strenuous physical activity (which all must be avoided). When heavy bleeding occurs, sit straight up and **apply firm pressure on the dressing** with a towel for 20 minutes. Keep the pressure constant during that time; **do not let up**. The pressure will, at first, force more blood out of the dressing — a normal occurrence that should not alarm you. Then call my office or, after hours, have my service page me.

**Antibiotics.** Continue to **take all antibiotics** prescribed for you. Don't stop taking them until you've finished your prescription.

**Ice Packs.** Although you may **use an ice pack** on the wound during the first 24 hours, be careful not to wet your dressing. Apply the ice pack on top of the compression dressing for 10 minutes every half-hour, or for 20 minutes every hour. Do not exceed 20 minutes in any one period since that could increase the chances of bleeding.

**Bruising.** Bruising around the surgical site, which may not appear for three to five days, **is normal**. Do not be alarmed if the bruising develops further from the surgical site (i.e. bruising under eyes after surgery on forehead).

**Smoking.** Do **not smoke** cigars, cigarettes, or pipes during the first two weeks. Also avoid second-hand tobacco smoke. Smoke deprives the blood of oxygen, which a healing wound needs in abundant quantities. A lack of oxygen can lead to the partial death of wound edges as well as increase the risk of losing a graft or flap. As a result, chances of infection are increased. This could necessitate additional surgery, result in unsightly wounds and dressings, and prolong convalescence for several months.

**Sleeping.** If you've had facial surgery, sleep on two to three pillows to **elevate your head** during the first two nights. For the five days, do **not sleep on the affected side**. Leave a night light on to avoid accidentally tripping over or bumping into anything — which might injure your wound, rip the stitches, or cause bleeding.

**Sneezing/ Coughing.** If you need to sneeze or cough, **lightly apply pressure** to the surgical site.

**Swimming.** While your stitches are in place, do **not swim** — in a pool, a pond, a lake, the ocean, or anywhere — nor use a sauna, whirlpool, or hot tub. A very difficult-to-treat infection may develop.

**Traveling.** Avoid it if you can. But if you must leave the area, ***call my office*** first to discuss any medical considerations.

**Aspirin/ Advil / Supplements.** If you had been taking aspirin, Advil (Motrin) or any other supplements regularly before surgery and were asked to discontinue them, you may begin taking them again two days after surgery unless otherwise directed.

## Notes on Specific Surgeries

**Forehead, Eyelid, Upper-Nose Surgery.** A black eye (bruise) and significant swelling can occur and last for a few weeks. Makeup may cover the bruise as long as it does not contact the stitches. The swelling tends to be worse the morning after surgery, then improves as you are up and around during the day, but worsens again the next morning. Sleep with your head on a few pillows, or sleep in a recliner chair for the first two nights.

**Lower-Nose Surgery.** When blowing your nose, place a tissue below the nose and blow gently. Do not pinch the nostrils. Wipe carefully.

**Lip Surgery.** •Be careful with liquids and foods that are hot; with a numb lip, you could dribble and burn yourself — or you could accidentally bite your lip, tongue or inner cheek. •Straws should ***not*** be used, but using a child's "sippy cup" or baby spoon may be helpful. •Be aware that you may experience significant swelling for a few days to a few weeks. Immediately after surgery, limit your meals to foods that are soft — such as eggs, yogurt, or those that are pureed in a blender or food processor — and to such products as Slim Fast, Ensure and Sustecal (available without prescription in drug stores. After 5 to 7 days, you may have pasta, chopped meats and small bites of chicken or fish. Harder foods such as apples and crusty French bread, which require you to open your mouth wide, should be avoided for 3 weeks. •For the first two weeks, limit talking, smiling and laughing. •Finally, any exposed stitches on the red part of your lip should be covered with a thin film of Aquaphor Healing Ointment (available without a prescription in drug stores).

**Arm/ Shoulder.** It is important that you take it easy and avoid heavy lifting for 3 weeks. When carrying a purse, briefcase, shopping bag, and the like, use the opposite arm or shoulder.

**Hand.** For the day of and one day after surgery, keep your hand higher than your heart. While sitting or standing, place your forearm on top of your head or place your hand on top of the opposite shoulder. While sleeping during the first week, place your arm on top of your chest if you are lying on your back. If you are lying on your opposite side, rest your hand on the side of your thigh or on two pillows placed in front of you.

**Lower Leg Surgery.** For the first two days, keep the wound on your lower leg higher than your heart — except, of course, when using the bathroom or kitchen. For the rest of the first week, elevate the wound for 10 minutes every hour.

**Chest/Back.** It is very important that you take it easy and avoid heavy lifting for 3 weeks. Be cautious when pushing yourself off the bed or chair. Do not hug someone tightly. No golf, baseball, push-ups, or sit-ups for three weeks.