

## General Information for Neck Lift Patients

Please read the following information carefully

### Information before your surgery...

The night before your surgery, please do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight. This includes water, candy, and mints.

The office or hospital will call you the day before your surgery to confirm your arrival time.

It is recommended that all patients wear loose, comfortable clothing on the day of surgery. **A top that buttons or zips up in the front is ideal** so it does not need to be pulled over your head. Please do not wear any make-up, contact lenses or jewelry.

We recommend for our patients to **quit smoking** as soon as possible. Please do not smoke **6 weeks** before and after your surgery, as this may cause complications with your healing process.

Regular prescription medicine can be taken as usual. If you need to take something on the day of your surgery, please use a minimal sip of water.

### Aspirin (ASA) and other anti-inflammatory medication

The following medications should be stopped 7 days before surgery, as they can cause excessive bleeding and bruising during and after your surgery. Please consult Dr. Seal when you should restart the medication post-operatively:

- Aspirin (ASA). **Please discuss this with Dr. Seal.**
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as Ibuprofen (Advil), Naproxen and others.
- Anti-coagulants and blood thinners (Warfarin/Coumadin). **Please discuss this with Dr. Seal.**
- Herbal medications - Check with your doctor.
- Vitamin E

Recreational drugs or alcohol should not be used 24 hours before and after your surgery. These can interact with your anaesthetic and/or post-operative pain medication and cause serious complications.

You will need to have a responsible adult accompany you to and from the hospital. There should also be someone who can **stay with you for the first 24 hours after your surgery**. If you do not have someone to do this, please let the office know and arrangements can be made to hire a nursing escort. If you are traveling to Vancouver, please make arrangements to stay within the lower mainland overnight after your surgery.

Many patients feel well 2 weeks following their surgery. It is recommended, however, to arrange **3 weeks off from work**, or any other **significant commitments**, to help with a longer recovery if needed, or if you have some bruising and swelling that requires time to resolve. You will also **not be able to do anything strenuous for 4 weeks following surgery**.

### **Information after your surgery...**

1. You will be given a prescription for medication to make you more comfortable after your surgery. **Take the medication as it is prescribed**. During the first 2-3 days, do not wait to feel any discomfort, and plan to take the medication regularly. At night, take the medication **before you go to sleep**, and consider setting an alarm to take your scheduled dose during the night. This will help with your pain control in the morning. You should refrain from driving while taking these medications.
2. The anaesthetic and post-operative medications can occasionally have some common side-effects, such as, **nausea** and **constipation**. **Over-the-counter medications can minimize** these side effects and are available at your local pharmacy. An option for nausea is **Gravol**, and for constipation, **Colase**. A pharmacist can help you with these if you have questions. **If you are feeling nauseated**, please use the **acetaminophen** and **Gravol suppositories** that are provided. It is important to **avoid vomiting** as this creates increase pressure on the blood vessels and muscles of the face and can **create bleeding**.
3. You should go straight home after your surgery and **relax and rest for the first 24 hours**. Please avoid anything that may increase your blood pressure, as this can result in bleeding. You are encouraged to **gently walk around at home** before going to sleep.
4. **Rest frequently** for the first week after surgery.

5. Many patients find starting with clear fluids and simple, soft foods to be the most gentle on their stomach over the first 12-24 hours after their surgery.
6. You will be provided with an **ice mask and cold packs** that can be applied for **15 minutes** every **few hours** during the **first week** following surgery. Span the cold packs from under your chin and tie them over the top of your head. **Cold compresses and ice packs are the most important thing to do to help minimize the swelling.**
7. **Sleeping** on your back with your **head elevated** on **several pillows** is recommended to help decrease any swelling. Use a **rolled-up towel** to help support your neck and prevent neck strain. Having your **neck slightly hyperextended** helps to prevent creases under your chin.
8. **Showering:** You may shower 1 day after the procedure. Please **do not** get your **face** or **hair wet** for the first **3 days**. As well, please do not have the shower too hot, as this can cause overheating and result in bleeding.
9. The incisions can be cleaned with “Q-Tips” soaked in Hydrogen Peroxide 3% twice a day.
10. Please apply the **antibiotic ointment** to your incisions **twice a day**. If you are allergic to sulfa, you can use a non-sulfate based ointment, such as ‘Bactroban’.
11. Your sutures will need to be removed at different time periods after your surgery. This will be reviewed during your follow-up visits (usually at **6-7 days**, and then **9-10 days**).
12. You will be **unable** to perform any **heavy lifting** or **strenuous activities or exercise** for **4 weeks** following your surgery. As well, avoid bending over during the first 2 weeks after surgery.
13. **Make-up** and **hair products** should be **avoided** around the incisions for the first **2 weeks**.
14. Your follow-up appointments will be provided to you by the office.
15. After you leave the hospital, there are a few things to watch during your healing process. If you see any of the following, **please call Dr. Seal**, or St. Paul’s hospital at 604-682-2344 and ask to speak to the plastic surgeon on call:
  - **Leg swelling**
  - **Shortness of breath**
  - **Redness around your incisions**
  - **Increased pain around your incisions**
  - **An area on the face becomes excessively bruised, firm or swollen**

## **Common Things to Expect and General Recommendations:**

- Moderate discomfort can be experienced around the incision which should gradually improve. If this pain is increasing, please call the numbers you will be provided.
- A small amount of blood and fluid can drain from the incision line and sutures. You can dab this with Q-tips or gauze that is provided.
- Swelling can commonly occur and usually is the most noticeable over the first 72 hours. This usually resolves within 3 weeks, however, can occasionally take longer to resolve.
- A significant amount of bruising can also occur. This again, is usually the most noticeable over the first 72 hours, and resolves over the course of 3 weeks. For some patients, this process can take longer. You may apply camouflage make-up after the sutures are removed away from the incision lines.
- Walking around is encouraged during your recovering time, as long as you do not increase your heart rate or raise your blood pressure.
- **Diet:** Make sure you drink plenty of fluids over the first week after surgery. Sip from a cup, and do not use a straw, as this can create undue strain on the muscles of the face as you recover.
- You can get your hair wet after 3 days. Please do not shower if you are feeling dizzy and ensure there is someone nearby to assist you. Use luke warm water, and avoid vigorous massage of the face and scalp. To dry your hair, use a hair dryer on a low setting, held approximately 1 foot away from your head. Please avoid the use of hair products (eg. conditioners and hairspray) for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Please avoid hair dye for 4-6 weeks.
- Please keep your incisions out of the sun for the first year after surgery. Remember your incisions are vulnerable to UV exposure from the sun even on cloudy days.

***If you have any questions during your post-operative course, please do not hesitate to contact our office.***