



Facelift Post-Operative Instructions

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Your guide to a smooth and confident recovery

Nursing phone number: 437-494-3536

Outside of business hours, texting is available on the nursing line. For emergencies, please go to your nearest emergency room.

Dressings & Wound Care

- At the end of surgery, soft dressings and a **supportive facial wrap** will be placed around your cheeks, jawline, and neck.
- Please keep these dressings **clean and dry** until your first post-operative appointment (usually **24–48 hours** after surgery).
- At your first visit, the wrap will be removed and replaced with a lighter supportive garment that you will wear as advised.
- Small drains may be placed behind the ears or in the neck. If present, you will receive instructions on how to care for them until they are removed (typically **1–3 days**).
- Once cleared to shower, allow clean water to run gently over the incision areas; pat dry.
- All sutures are either dissolving or will be removed at your follow-up visit (typically **5–7 days**).
- DO NOT apply heat, creams, or makeup to incision areas until you are instructed to do so.
- Mild oozing or spotting is normal. If a dressing becomes saturated, replace it with clean gauze.

Cold Compressing

- For the first **48 hours**, apply **cool compresses** (never ice directly on the skin) for **10–15 minutes every hour while awake**.
- This reduces swelling, bruising, and overall discomfort.
- Avoid any pressure on the cheeks, jawline, or neck.

Pain & Medication

- Most patients are pleasantly surprised by how limited their discomfort is.
- For best baseline pain control, take:
 - **Tylenol Extra Strength (Acetaminophen)** — every **6 hours**
 - **Celebrex 200 mg** — every **12 hours**
- If additional relief is required, you may take:
 - **Hydromorphone** — every **6 hours as needed**
- This combination of anti-inflammatory (Celebrex) and analgesic (Tylenol or Hydromorphone) is recognized as highly effective for facelift recovery.
- All medications may be stopped once you are comfortable.
- Because pain pills, especially narcotics, can cause constipation, consider:
 - **Colace 200 mg twice daily**



- **Milk of Magnesia 15–30 cc at bedtime**
- Generous hydration + fruit or fiber-rich foods

Swelling, Bruising & Numbness

- Expect swelling and bruising around the cheeks, jawline, neck, and sometimes the chest or upper chest.
- Swelling peaks at **48–72 hours** and then improves steadily.
- Bruising may migrate downward as it resolves.
- Temporary numbness along the cheeks, ears, and neck is common and improves gradually over several weeks to months.
- Facial tightness or a “pulled” sensation is normal in the early period.

Incision Care

- Incisions are placed discreetly around the ears, hairline, and sometimes under the chin.
- Keep these areas clean and dry until your surgeon advises otherwise.
- Once sutures are removed or steri-strips fall off (typically at **1–2 weeks**), you may begin gentle cleansing and scar care.
- Avoid pulling or stretching the incision areas during the early weeks of healing.

Scar Care

- Once cleared (usually **14–20 days**), begin applying your recommended **scar gel** twice daily.
- Avoid sun exposure or tanning for **4 months**; early UV exposure can permanently darken scars.
- Silicone sheeting may be recommended if any incision appears raised or red after 6 weeks.

Sleeping Position

- Sleep with your **head elevated** on 2–3 pillows for the first **2 weeks** to help reduce swelling.
- Avoid sleeping on your side or stomach during this time, as pressure can affect healing and symmetry.

Activity & Restrictions

- Light walking is encouraged the day after surgery.
- Avoid bending, heavy lifting, vigorous exercise, or anything that raises your blood pressure for **2 weeks**.
- No strenuous activity for **4–6 weeks**.
- Avoid turning your head sharply; move your upper body instead.
- Avoid smoking or nicotine exposure, as it severely compromises healing.

Hair Care & Facial Care

- You may gently wash your hair once cleared (typically after your first dressing change).



- Avoid heat styling tools (curling irons, hair dryers on high heat) for **3 weeks**.
- Avoid facial treatments, makeup around incisions, or skincare acids/retinoids for **4-6 weeks**, or until the incisions fully heal.

Makeup

- You may apply makeup to non-incision areas immediately.
- Makeup near incision lines may be resumed once incisions are dry, smooth, and closed — usually **10–14 days**.

Emotional Recovery

It is common to feel self-conscious, anxious, or discouraged in the first days after surgery. Swelling, bruising, and tightness temporarily distort the facial contours.

Every week brings visible improvement.

Most patients begin to see early results by **2–3 weeks**, with continued refinement over several months.

When to Contact Us

Please contact **Aspect Plastic Surgery** if you experience:

- Sudden, severe swelling on one side
- Increasing redness, warmth, or foul-smelling drainage
- Persistent or worsening pain
- Fever > 38°C
- Vision changes, severe headache, or vomiting
- Shortness of breath, calf pain, or chest pain

If urgent and our office is closed, please visit **North York General Hospital Emergency Department** or your nearest emergency facility.