



Postoperative instructions for face lift surgery

1. Following surgery you may eat whatever you feel up to. Please do not start with a heavy meal as your first meal following surgery. Some patients experience slight nausea following surgery. Eating a heavy meal can trigger vomiting or make the nausea worse. I would recommend starting with some Gatorade or Sprite first. If you are able to tolerate this without problems, I would suggest progressing to soup. If you can also tolerate this, you may eat whatever you feel like. If you do not feel like eating solid food, please maintain your fluid intake with at least ½ cup of fluid every 30-45 minutes.
2. If you do feel nauseated, stop all oral intake for 6 hours. Then slowly start up again with Gatorade/Sprite and progress slowly back up to regular food.
3. You may feel quite drowsy during the first evening following surgery. This is perfectly fine. Sleep whenever your body tells you to. When you sleep, try to sleep on two pillows. This will minimize bruising and swelling. Continue doing this for at least 3-5 days if possible, preferably for 7 days.
4. You can use ice packs to reduce the swelling. If using icepacks, separate your skin from the ice pack with a towel, etc. so that the ice pack does not stick to the underlying skin. Also, use ice packs for 30 minutes at a time, and give your skin at least 30 minutes time off before applying the ice pack again. **DO NOT SLEEP WITH THE ICE PACK ON.**
5. You are free to get up and walk following surgery. You might be drowsy on the first night. Therefore, please have someone help you to the bathroom, in and out of bed, etc. This will prevent you from having an accidental fall.
6. The day following surgery, you are free to get up and walk around without assistance. I actually recommend casual walking. Casual walking mobilizes lymph fluid and reduces the duration of bruising and swelling.
7. Do not lift heavy weight (greater than 5 lbs.) for 1 week, and do not work-out or run for 7-10 days. Once you have been examined at your postoperative visit, you will be cleared to return to full activity.
8. You have been prescribed narcotic pain medications. These medications can make you drowsy. Do not drive while on narcotic pain medications. Once you feel that you do not require the narcotic pain medications, transition yourself to extra-strength Tylenol. Do not substitute Motrin, Aspirin, Advil, Alleve, Naproxen, or Ibuprofen. These medications can thin your blood and make you more prone to bruising, bleeding and swelling. I do not want you taking these medications for 7 days following surgery
9. If your work does not require heavy lifting or exertion, you may return to work when you are no longer on the narcotic pain medications

10. Do not make legal decisions while on narcotic pain medications.
11. You may shower on the day following surgery. You can get all incisions wet. Do not be rough with your incisions. Let the warm water fall across the incisions. Whatever crusts and dried blood falls off is fine. Once you are done showering, dab your incisions gently with a towel to dry them. Following drying, apply a small amount of the antibiotic ointment that was prescribed to you on your incisions.
12. Remember that parts of your face and scalp may be numb. Exercise extreme caution while using a hair dryer. Use the hair dryer on the cool more, or place one hand in front of the dryer so that you can gauge temperature.
13. For the first 3-4 days, it is important to keep your eyes moist. Apply 2-3 drops of artificial tears every 2-3 times during the day. If your eyes still feel dry, then apply some lubricating eye ointment (e.g. lacrilube: available at CVS, Walgreens, etc. in the eye drops aisle) whenever you go to sleep.
14. For the first 2-3 days following surgery, you are required to do leg exercises. There is a good likelihood that you might be lying down for extended periods of time during the first few days. To prevent blood clots in your legs, it is recommended that you get up and walk, or perform 10 leg raises every 2 hours. Once you start walking during the day, you can stop such exercises.
15. Your postoperative appointments will be on postoperative day 1, between 5-7 days following surgery and on postoperative day 10. Sutures and/or staples will be removed 5-7 days and 10 days following surgery. This is not painful, and you should not be anxious or scared.
16. You cannot drive for the first 24 hours. You may resume driving when you are no longer taking the narcotic pain medications, and you have no limitation of your visual field.
17. You will need someone to bring you to the office on the day after surgery for your first postoperative visit.
18. Someone needs to be with you on the first night following surgery. If you need help in this matter, please call our office prior to your surgery so that adequate preparations can be made.
19. If you have an emergency, call 911. If you have any problems during your postoperative period, please call 281-557-3223. Someone will return your call 24 hours a day/7 days a week.
20. Symptoms to definitely call the office
 - a. Fever greater than 101.5°F/38.5°C
 - b. Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath
 - c. Changes in vision
 - d. Massive bleeding from operative site
 - e. Extreme swelling that comes about over a few minutes
 - f. Increasing pain
21. Please bring these instructions with you for your postoperative appointment.
22. Thank you again for choosing Athré Surgical Associates.