

POST-OPERATIVE CARE FOLLOWING D E R M A B R A S I O N

Call our office promptly if:

- ✓ **Your temperature is over 100°.**
- ✓ **You experience increasing redness and swelling of the face beyond the first post-operative day.**
- ✓ **You have had difficulties with cold sores or fever blisters, and you develop a flare up of these post-operatively.**

If any of the above should occur during regular office hours, the facial plastics nurse can be reached at 217 545-2540. The regular office hours are 8:00 to 4:30.

If the nurse is not available, the facial plastics secretary can be reached at 217 545-2598.

If it is after regular office hours (8:00 AM to 4:30 PM), we can be reached 24 hours a day by calling 217 545-8000 and asking the ENT resident on call be paged.

What Can I Expect?

- ✓ Some bloody discharge from the dermabraded area is routine after surgery. When you are sent home following surgery, there is an absorbent dressing on the face and it is usually secured with a mesh elastic dressing. Some blood and serous fluid will be noted in the area of dermabrasion and it is most noted within the first 24 to 48 hours.
- ✓ Mild pain or a burning sensation is routinely expected after surgery, but most patients require very little pain medication.
- ✓ Swelling is also expected during the first 24 to 48 hours and may even cause some swelling of the eyelids if the cheeks or forehead have been treated.
- ✓ Redness in the area of surgery will gradually fade over the first weeks or occasionally months after surgery.

How Do I Care For Myself After Surgery?

The day following surgery any absorbent dressing can be removed and the following cleansing program should begin:

- Using gauze squares or a washcloth, soak the treated areas with a solution of one (1) tablespoon of white vinegar and one (1) cup of cool water. This should be done at least 6 to 8 times per day until the skin is completely healed, usually within 7 to 10 days. Any bluish-gray coating should be gently soaked off. Pat the skin dry and apply a heavy layer of Aquaphor Ointment or A&D Ointment. Dilute the vinegar by half if it is too strong. You should keep the treated areas moist with ointments at **ALL TIMES**. Do not pick or remove the crusted areas. Do not allow areas to dry out or scab over.
- Sun avoidance is **mandatory** following dermabrasion surgery. The area of dermabrasion is exquisitely sensitive to the sun for 6 to 12 months following surgery, and sun protection is necessary. After the first two weeks, a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of SPF 15 (or greater) should be applied **at least twice a day. This is very important.**

- A thin layer of skin will have covered the area of dermabrasion within 9 to 14 days following surgery and once this occurs, the lubricating ointment will no longer be required.
- Oral acne medications can be initiated immediately following surgery, and topical acne preparations can be re-initiated with the approval of your doctor.
- Whiteheads or milium often develop within the first several weeks after surgery. These represent areas where a small oil gland has become plugged. Opening it to the surface with a small sterile needle or gently opening the pore with an abrasive cleanser (such as a Buf-Puf) can be undertaken under the direction of your surgeon.
- Most patients do not return to work for approximately two (2) weeks following the surgery. You will need to discuss the specifics of the time of your return to work with your doctor.

