

# POST-OPERATIVE CARE FOLLOWING F A C E L I F T

Call our office promptly if:

- ✓ **You have a fever of chills.**
- ✓ **There is an unusual amount of bleeding**
- ✓ **You have progressive bruising and increasing pain.**

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?**

- ✓ A large compressive dressing will cover the face and scalp for 24 hours after surgery.
- ✓ Pain is usually mild to moderate in intensity.
- ✓ Bruising and swelling will be present and should gradually subside over the next 10 to 14 days.
- ✓ It is not unusual to have drainage for the first 24 hours after surgery in the surgical drains.
- ✓ Dressings are usually removed on the first post-operative visit.
- ✓ Sutures are gradually removed over several post-operative visits.
- ✓ Numbness around the ear lobes will be present for at least 1 to 4 weeks.
- ✓ Some numbness in the neck skin is normal for several weeks (in the neck and face especially).
- ✓ Tightness when opening the mouth.

## **How Do I Care For Myself After Surgery?**

- ✓ Do not smoke for 3 to 4 weeks before and after surgery (preferably never). Smoking after surgery is similar to smoking before surgery; it slows the healing process and increases the risk of skin loss or damage.
- ✓ Avoid strenuous activity and/or exercise for two weeks or until approved by your physician.
- ✓ Wear elastic face support as prescribed by your physician for 2 to 4 days following surgery.
- ✓ It is best to sleep in a recliner or with a few pillows under your head for the first 24 hours to keep the swelling down.
- ✓ You can shampoo your hair 2 to 3 days after surgery, using tepid water only.
- ✓ Turn from the shoulders
- ✓ Use care when brushing or combing your hair near the suture line for 3 weeks.
- ✓ You will need to be seen in the office the day following surgery and the dressing will be removed.
- ✓ Often, 1 or 2 surgical drains will be removed during this visit as well.
- ✓ If drains have been used, follow the instructions received at the surgery center.
- ✓ Clean the incision lines twice daily with half-strength Peroxide and apply Aquaphor.

## **Medications After Surgery**

- ✓ A prescription for pain medication will be given to you. Most often a drug like Tylenol with Codeine is used, which is adequate for pain control in most cases. Obviously, driving a car or any potentially dangerous activity is to be avoided because the pain medications can alter your performance.
- ✓ Avoid taking pain medications and antibiotics at the same time as the combination may cause stomach upset. Try to eat when taking these medications to further reduce stomach irritation.