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## Facial Plastic Surgery: Postoperative Instructions

The skin of the face has an excellent blood supply, which makes it relatively resistant to infections and which promotes rapid healing. Complications are therefore rare. If you have had a general anesthetic, you should go home and rest for the day. If you have had any type of sedation, or if you are requiring narcotic pain relievers, you should not drive or operate dangerous machinery for 24 hours. Nausea is not uncommon after general anesthesia. You may wish to begin with a clear liquid diet and progress slowly according to your appetite. The following instructions may apply to your surgery:

1. Cold compresses are recommended for 48 hours to reduce swelling. Ice bags, frozen gel packs or frozen peas in small Ziploc bags may be used, even over dressings.
2. Plastic splints and/or thin paper strips applied directly to the wound should not be removed. If the edges begin to curl up, these edges can be trimmed off with scissors.
3. Bandages: You may remove gauze dressings in 2 days. You should replace any dressing that becomes wet or soiled. A dry sterile dressing may be worn longer for comfort, to camouflage the wound, or to absorb further drainage.
4. You may shower or bathe the affected area 48 hours after surgery, unless a drain is present.
5. If the suture line is exposed, it should be washed three times daily with warm soap and water and then kept lubricated at all times with antibiotic ointment. Many patients are sensitive to the components of Neosporin. Bacitracin may be a better choice. The ointment should be applied liberally so that dry hard scabs are not allowed to form. Allowing a wound to dry out creates a deeper scar.
6. Pressure dressings are routinely used for chin and neck surgery and for otoplasty surgery. If you are supplied with an elastic neck strap, this should be worn continuously for the first week and should be worn at home and at night for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> week. If there is any significant swelling in the face or lips, remove the elastic wrap for 30 minutes and reapply with slightly less pressure.
7. Drains may be used to prevent accumulation of fluid. The recovery nurse will instruct you in the care of your drain. Bulb type drains should be evacuated three times daily and whenever ½ full. Record the drainage in milliliters (cc's). Test tube type drains should have the test tube replaced three times daily and whenever ½ full. Test tubes are provided with a vacuum and cannot be reused after the vacuum is lost. Record the number tubes used and estimate the volume of fluid. Call your surgeon daily with a report, using his mobile phone number below.
8. Hyperpigmentation can occur if wounded skin is exposed to sunlight. This hyperpigmentation can last for two years or more. It is important to use a daily broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher for both ultraviolet A and ultraviolet B light. Skin cancer and most age-related changes are a direct result of sunlight exposure. The use of sunscreen should become a lifelong habit.
9. Depending on the size of your wound, activity should be limited for 1-2 weeks to avoid injury to the wound and to avoid excessive overheating that may increase the chance of bleeding.
10. Danger signs include significant increase in pain or swelling that may indicate the collection of fluid, blood or pus under the suture line. These symptoms should be brought immediately to your surgeon's attention. If the office is not open, please call our mobile phone first, then call the physician on call if necessary, or go to the emergency room.

**Please make an appointment** for a wound check and suture removal about 5-7 days after surgery. For larger procedures, a second follow-up is performed with the surgeon after one month. For Additional instructions or information, visit [www.RichmondENT.com](http://www.RichmondENT.com).

**Appointments and routine questions:**

**Office phone 804 330-5501**

**Emergency Mobile Phone Numbers:**

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