

## **Instructions for MACS LIFT Post-Operative**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following instructions are based on experience with many MACS-Lift operations. They will answer practically every question that may arise regarding the "do's and don'ts" after surgery. You and your family should read these instructions several times to familiarize yourselves thoroughly with them. Attempt to follow them faithfully because those who do so generally have the smoothest postoperative course. This favors proper healing.

### **SWELLING**

Every operation, no matter how minor, is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues. The amount of swelling varies from person to person. It seems to be more in the face since there is looseness of the tissues and because even a small amount makes the features appear distorted. Sometimes the swelling becomes a little greater the second day after your operation. It may be more pronounced along the jawline and is generally worse when you first arise in the morning (proof that it is better to stay up as much as possible). The swelling itself is not serious and is not an indication that something is going wrong with your operation.

### **DISCOLORATION**

It is not unusual to have varying amounts of discoloration about the face. Like the swelling, it may become more pronounced, especially in the neck after the first day or so. Remember this is temporary.

### **TURNING THE HEAD**

Avoid turning the head or bending the neck. When you must turn, move the shoulders and head as one unit, or as though you had a "stiff neck". This protects the lift, allowing it to last as many years as possible.

### **PAIN**

There is usually little actual pain following a facelift. You may experience a deep bruised sensation as a result of the swelling and the face may seem heavy. As is usually the case with such things, this seems worse at night and when one becomes nervous. Unfortunately, the usually prescribed pain killers often cause sensations of lightheadedness, particularly in the immediate postoperative period. Therefore, it is better to try the application of cold compresses before resorting to drugs. If this is not effective, we will generally prescribe an extra strength Tylenol if there is no history of sensitivity to these products. If the pain is severe, notify the office staff.

If you should have discomfort around the face, try an application of cold compresses before resorting to stronger drugs. If this is not effective, you may take Extra-Strength Tylenol or the prescribed pain medication. Under NO circumstances should ASPIRIN or medications containing aspirin or salicylates be

taken. Be sure to check the labels of any pain medications. If Extra-Strength Tylenol does not help, then take the prescribed medication.

### **ICE COMPRESSES**

Wash cloths (not an ice bag) dipped in ice chips applied across the jaw and neck for 20 minutes, several times daily during the first week may help reduce swelling, discomfort and discoloration. They may be placed in a plastic wrapper (baggie, etc.) to avoid wetting the dressing and your clothing.

### **REMOVAL OF DRESSINGS**

A pressure dressing will be applied immediately after surgery. It is to remain in place until the following morning. You should be as quiet as possible during this time, therefore, a great deal of talking and having too many visitors is discouraged. If your dressing begins to feel excessively tight or uncomfortable, please report to us.

### **ELEVATE THE HEAD**

To help minimize swelling, the head of the bed should be elevated 30-40 degrees while you are at the surgery center and when you go home.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Specific medications for pain are prescribed for you. Take these medications only if you feel they are needed.

### **AFTER SURGERY**

If you live in another city, we prefer you stay at a hotel or with a friend beginning the morning of surgery. You should plan to stay in town overnight after surgery.

### **SWELLING**

As previously mentioned, your face and neck will remain swollen with varying amounts of discoloration for several days. The main thing to remember is that swelling eventually subsides; you can help in several ways:

1. STAY UP- Sitting, standing, walking around as much as possible on your first postoperative day. IMPORTANT!! You should rest when you tire.
2. AVOID TURNING THE HEAD or bending the neck. When you must turn move the whole body as if you have a stiff neck.
3. AVOID BENDING OR LIFTING heavy things for one week. Besides aggravating the swelling, this may raise your blood pressure and cause a hemorrhage.
4. AVOID HITTING OR BUMPING YOUR FACE AND NECK. It is wise to not pick up small children and you should sleep alone for one week after surgery.

5. SLEEP WITH THE HEAD OF THE BED ELEVATED for one to two weeks after surgery. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of it. Try not to roll onto your face; this tends to tear down the supporting stitches used under the skin of your face. It is necessary that you sleep on your back for 30 nights. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45 degree angle to be more comfortable.
6. SUPPORT THE SWOLLEN TISSUES with a chin sling applied according to the directions we will give you. Wear it constantly until one week after your surgery. Then, wear it for another two weeks while you are sleeping.
7. AVOID STRAINING AT THE STOOL- If you need a laxative, we recommend Correctol (it is over the counter) as well as plenty of water and walking.
8. AVOID SUNNING of the face for one month, ordinary exposure is not harmful.

### **DISCOLORATION**

Sometimes the discoloration can be helped to some extent by using makeup. Our skin care specialist can help you with appropriate makeup and application. Do not apply makeup over the incisions themselves for several days after the sutures have been removed. However, you can bring it up to the line of the incisions.

### **HEMORRHAGE**

If hemorrhage does occur, go to bed, elevate the head, apply ice compresses about the face and neck and report it by telephone. You will probably be told to come to the office.

### **TEMPERATURE**

Generally, the body temperature does not rise much above 100 degrees following a MACS-Lift. This rise is due to the healing process. Patient's will often think they have increased temperature because they feel warm. To be sure, measure your temperature with a thermometer. Report any persistent temperature above 100 degrees.

### **WEAKNESS**

It is not unusual after a person has anesthetic or any type of operation to feel weak, have palpitations, break out in "cold sweats" or get dizzy. This generally clears up in a few days without medication.

### **DEPRESSION**

It is not unusual for a person to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery. No matter how much the patient wanted the operation, sometimes they are shocked when they see their face swollen and discolored after surgery. Be realistic and realize that this is a temporary condition which will subside in time. Don't dwell on the way you look, but keep busy and take care of yourself.

### **NUMBNESS**

Parts of the face, neck and ears sometimes feel "numb" after surgery. This is a temporary condition and will resolve in time.

### **TIGHTNESS OF THE FACE**

The skin of the face may feel tight for a while and you may feel that it interferes with your smile; this will disappear within a few weeks.

### **THINNING OF THE HAIR**

There may be transient thinning of the hair in areas adjacent to suture lines in the temple and behind the ear.

### **INJURY TO THE FACE**

You need not be too concerned unless the blow is hard or if hemorrhage or considerable swelling occurs. Report the accident at your next office visit or by telephone if you are concerned.

### **MEDICATIONS**

When discharged from the surgery center, you will need to start taking your antibiotic. Take it until it is gone. Your other medication will be for pain relief. This should be taken only if Extra-Strength Tylenol does not help your pain. AVOID TAKING ANY MEDICATION ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.

### **RESUMING ACTIVITIES**

1. WEARING GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES. Eye glasses may be worn as soon as the bandages are removed. Wear glasses over the chin strap. Contact lenses may be inserted the day after surgery.
2. HAIR AND BODY CARE. You may wash your hair with a mild shampoo and lukewarm water in a shower and comb it out with a large tooth comb on the second day after surgery. You may use a blow dryer on a cold setting. You may have your hair washed at a salon one week after your surgery, but do not use a heat dryer. A blow dryer on the cold setting is required. Be careful not to rest the area where there are incisions on the rim of the wash bowl. Hair coloring should be delayed for six weeks postoperatively. Do not wash your hair the day you have your sutures removed. WASH THE FACE gently with mild soap twice daily after the first week using a gentle upward motion. Do not tweeze the eyebrows for one week. A wig may be worn as long as it doesn't fit directly over the stitches.
3. HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES. You may be up and around the house with your usual activities except those previously mentioned. No strenuous activity.
4. PULL OVER CLOTHING. Do not wear anything that pulls over the head for one week after surgery.
5. ATHLETICS. No swimming, strenuous activity or exercise that involves turning the head for four weeks.

6. KEEPING A "STIFF" FACE AND NECK. You should not move the face and neck excessively until the skin heals to the underlying tissues. This includes:
  - a) Avoid excessive grinning and smiling.
  - b) Don't turn the head without turning the neck and shoulders as one unit for one week.
  - c) Don't bend the head forward or extend the neck backward for two weeks.
  - d) Avoid gum or foods that are hard to chew for one week. Soups, mashed potatoes, stewed chicken or any easily chewable food is permissible.
  - e) Avoid yawning with the mouth widely opened for two weeks.
7. RETURNING TO WORK AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. Returning to work depends on the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop and the amount of physical activity and public contact required by your job. The average patient usually returns to work or goes out socially one or two weeks after surgery when the above factors are minimal. You have to play this by ear.
8. DO NOT DRIVE for two weeks or when taking ANY sedative or prescription pain medication.

### **YOUR SCARS**

After all stitches have been removed, the scars will appear a deep pink color. There will be varying amounts of swelling in and around the scars themselves. In time, the scars will become white and the firmness of the scar will soften becoming less noticeable. Every individual varies in their rate of healing, but it takes approximately one year for these changes to occur.

### **DAILY CARE**

1. Go over your suture line three times daily with peroxide on a Q-tip. Apply a small amount of Bacitracin ointment to the suture lines.
2. Report any excessive bleeding that persists after applying pressure for 20 minutes.
3. Report any signs of infection such as excessive swelling, redness or drainage.

### **FINALLY**

- When the bandages are first removed the face will be swollen and discolored. The swelling will subside somewhat within two weeks. It will take 6-8 weeks for your face to reach its final contour.

### **REPORT**

- Temperature elevation (above 100 degrees)
- Sudden swelling or discoloration
- Hemorrhage
- Discharge from wound or evidence of infection
- Development of any drug reaction

Most of all, BE PATIENT during the healing process. If you have any questions, please call the office at 717-728-1700.