

# Postoperative Instructions for Patients Undergoing Facial Surgery

## 1. Getting home and postoperative supervision.

It is extremely hazardous to drive after general anesthesia or intravenous sedation. Please arrange for a responsible adult to drive you home and stay with you for at least 24 hours.

## 2. Activity for the first 24 hours.

The effects of anesthesia can remain in your body as long as 24 hours. After surgery, you must plan to rest for 24 hours. Avoid straining and stooping. Sit upright as much as possible.

## 3. Sleeping position, ice packs and compresses.

Sleeping with the head elevated on two pillows decreases the amount of bruising and swelling. Keep ice packs around your face for 48 hours to help reduce bruising and swelling. If you have also undergone eyelid surgery, apply compresses (washcloth or 4 x 4 gauze pads soaked in saline) to the eyes at the same time. Some patients prefer to use alternating bags of frozen peas from the freezer. Alternate 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off if using ice packs.

## 4. Diet.

After surgery you may take liquids such as soup, tea, soft drinks, or Jell-O. Gradually progress to a soft diet and then to a regular diet over the next 24 hours as tolerated.

## 5. Medications, herbal supplements, vitamins, and alcohol.

Regular Medications. You may resume your regular medications unless Dr. Boyd directs otherwise. However, avoid aspirin and aspirin-containing products for two weeks before and after surgery. Remember, many herbal supplements adversely affect the clotting process and actively cause bruising and bleeding. These should be stopped two weeks before surgery and may be resumed two weeks afterwards. Dr. Boyd does not recommend taking mega doses of vitamins more than the normal daily requirement (which is adequately met by a normal balanced diet). Please discontinue this form of medication for two weeks before and after surgery unless you are being treated for a specific deficiency. One multivitamin tablet per day is permissible, however.

Discharge Medications. Fill your prescriptions and take your post-operative medications as directed. If you should become nauseated or develop a rash, call the office

Pain Medications. Most strong pain medications are derived from morphine and are called opioids. They can induce varying degrees of nausea and vomiting in different individuals. If this is the case with you, try reducing the dose and taking the medication with meals. If the nausea persists you should take the anti-nausea medication as directed. If you remain nauseated, contact Dr. Boyd who will switch you to an alternate pain killer; but remember, any opioid can potentially make you sick. Persistent nausea may necessitate discontinuing opiates altogether and taking Tylenol or Ibuprofen instead. In any case, it is advisable to stop taking opioids as soon as possible to eliminate the associated drowsiness, hasten your recovery, and reduce the risk of dependence.

Stool Softener. Opioids can cause another troublesome side-effect: constipation. Avoid this by taking Colace 100mg twice daily or a stool softener of your own choice.

Antinausea medications. Dr. Boyd usually prescribes a medication that dissolves under your tongue. You may take this three times daily. Please note that this medication also causes constipation!

Antibiotics. Take postoperative antibiotics if directed. If you develop an itchy rash call Dr. Boyd's office.

Alcohol. Avoid alcohol until post-operative medications are finished.

## 6. Dressings.

Your dressing will be removed the day after surgery. If you do not stay overnight in hospital, someone must drive you to the office for this. Bring a scarf and sunglasses to hide your incisions after the dressing is removed!

## 7. Wound care, shampooing, showering.

After the bandages are removed, wash your hair daily with a mild shampoo. Do not use a hot hair dryer since it is easy to burn skin in which sensation is temporarily reduced. Do not use any coloring, bleach or perm chemicals on your hair for one month. You may have your hair styled two weeks after surgery.

## 8. Activity after the first 24 hours (including driving).

Avoid strenuous activity for two weeks after surgery. However, walking is encouraged. Do not drive for one week and never drive while taking pain medication. You may wear makeup after checking with Dr. Boyd.

**9. Things to avoid. (See 2 and 5 also)**

It is vital that you do not smoke after surgery to avoid respiratory and wound healing complications. Avoid sun exposure and wear sunscreen on the suture lines when it cannot be avoided.

**10. Bruising, swelling and other normal events.**

A moderate amount of swelling and bruising is common. It will take several weeks before you can see the final result. If you have unusual or severe pain or swelling (especially on one side of your face or neck), bleeding from the dressing or any other concerns, do not hesitate to contact Dr. Boyd.

Someone in the office will call you the day after surgery to check on your condition and answer any questions you might have. You can reach Dr. Boyd or a staff member around the clock by calling (310) 295-2287.

These instructions are not intended to cover every possible problem that could arise. Good judgment on your part is essential for a good result.