



## Facelift Instructions

This handout provides information on how to prepare for your facelift operation and what to expect as you are healing after your operation. Please read the handout carefully and keep it handy. Feel free to ask questions at any time.

Important information about preparing for your facelift operation:

1. Do not take products containing aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or Vitamin E pills for 10 days prior or for 1 week after your operation. Many medications contain these compounds which are known to prolong bleeding. It is safest to take only Tylenol for aches and pains prior to your operation. Do not drink red wine or smoke three days prior to your surgery.
2. Your prescriptions for pain and an antibiotic will be given to you ahead of time. You should fill these prior to surgery and have them available for when you arrive home from the hospital or office.

The following applies only if the boxes are checked:

3. You are having intravenous anesthesia, do not eat anything after 10:00 PM or drink anything after midnight. The morning of surgery you may brush your teeth and rinse out your mouth, but do not swallow any water.
4. You are not having IV anesthesia, please eat a light breakfast. No caffeine.
5. Laboratory work is needed for your procedure. You will be instructed where to have lab work done.
6. An EKG is needed as per your age or cardiac history.
7. Please arrange for a friend or family member to drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours following your surgery.
8. You will not be able to chemically treat your hair for 1 week prior to and 3 Weeks after your operation.
9. Be aware that you may not be able to fly for one week following your operation, so please plan accordingly.
10. In general, you will need at least 7 days off from work.

On the day of your operation:

1. Do not put any creams on your face. Do not wear makeup, dark or red nail polish, contact lenses or jewelry. Do not use hairspray, gel or mousse.
2. Please keep your valuables at home. You may bring your glasses and a pair of Sunglasses for the car ride home.
3. Wear comfortable clothing that is easy to dress in and out of. Wear a shirt that buttons or zips down the front.
4. You may want to bring a scarf to cover your head dressing.

After your surgery:

1. After your operation, you will awaken with a bandage on your head. There may be drainage tubes inserted at the back of the head bandage. These will be removed prior to going home.
2. The bandage on your head can be removed 1 to 2 days after your operation. You may shower and wash your hair at this time. You should gently wash around your incisions (suture line) with a mild soap such as Dove, Cataphyll or Neutrogena.
3. While sleeping, keep the head of your bed elevated to minimize swelling and lay on your back for the first 5-6 days.
4. For the first 36 hours, rest quietly at home with minimal talking or laughing. You may get up to use the bathroom or to take a light walk around the house. Exercise caution in your home and be careful with tasks such as climbing stairs when you are taking pain medications.
5. Turn your head and neck stiffly and as a unit for the first week after your operation, and avoid flexing and extending your neck as well.
6. Do not take your pain medication on an empty stomach as you may experience nausea and/or vomiting. Your antibiotic must be taken with food and must be completed in 4 days.
7. On the first day after your operation, you may gently wash your face by patting it with a facecloth. You can also carefully brush your teeth.
8. You may shower and wash your hair 2 days after the operation.
9. Your sutures will be removed 7 days post operatively. Please do not shampoo your hair for 48 hours after suture removal.

10. You will be able to wear makeup 10 days after your operation. Do not chew hard or tough foods for the first week after the operation.
11. It will be at least 1 week before you can begin light exercise such as walking or using a stationary bike.
12. Heavy exercise and heavy lifting are not permitted for 2 weeks.
13. Avoid the sun for 4 weeks after your operation. You must use sunscreen with an SPF of 30 for one year after the surgery. Apply the sunscreen to your face and directly over the scars. It is recommended that you continue to use sunscreen after one year.
14. You will be able to drive after 1 week. Be aware that pain medications cause Drowsiness and should not be used before driving.

What to expect as you are healing:

1. You will have bruising and swelling on your face and neck that will take 1-2 weeks to subside.
2. As the swelling subsides, you will feel hard areas under the skin on your face and neck. This is to be expected and will resolve in several weeks.
3. Your incisions may be raised; red and feel hard for several months, but most incisions are inconspicuous after 2-3 months.
4. Numbness in various areas of your face, neck, and ears is common and may persist for weeks or months.
5. It is normal to experience a feeling of tightness under your chin and behind your ears. Your neck may also feel stiff. The tightness and stiffness usually last several weeks. If one side of your face is considerably more painful than the other, please call the office and speak with a nurse or Dr. Gerstle.

Follow-up appointments:

1. Your first appointment will be 7 days after your surgery. At this time, your sutures will be removed. Do not shampoo hair for 48 hours following suture removal.
2. Your second appointment will be at two weeks.
3. Subsequent appointments will be suggested by Dr. Gerstle as needed.

Theo Gerstle, MD  
3363 Tates Creek Rd  
Suite 209  
Lexington, KY 40502

[www.lexingtonps.com](http://www.lexingtonps.com)  
TEL: 859-279-2111