

INSTRUCTIONS AFTER OTOPLASTY

WOUND CARE

You will have a head dressing placed after surgery that should stay on until your first post-operative visit. Most of the sutures are dissolvable but occasionally there are some that will be removed on your post-operative visit. Once the sutures are out, a scar cream should be massaged onto the incision lines twice a day for a month. This will also help the sutures dissolve. If any area of drainage remains, Polysporin ointment, rather than the scar cream, should be applied on those areas until the drainage has stopped. The scar cream is then also applied there. Scar cream can include Silicone, Vitamin E, or Bio-oil.

HEAD ELEVATION & SLEEPING POSITION

Head elevation reduces bruising, bleeding and swelling. Please do not swing your head down to pick something off the floor. Bend your knees instead. Also do not do any lifting or exercises for 4 weeks. It is helpful to sleep with stiff pillow or no pillow at all for the first 2-3 weeks after surgery since a 'puffy, soft' pillow will rub up against your ears. You will find it most comfortable to sleep on your back but sleeping on your side is allowed as long as you have the bandage or headband on. After 6 weeks, you can sleep any way you like without any protection.

COMPRESSION GARMENT

After the head dressing has been removed, a headband should be worn to cover the ears. This headband should be worn night and day for two weeks, and then at nighttime only for another four weeks. Its main function is to reduce bruising and swelling, and to protect the ear from being pulled forward. When the garment becomes soiled, any blood stain can be removed with Hydrogen Peroxide. It can be washed normally, and placed in the tumble dry cycle, or left to hang dry.

If your initial dressing falls off early or gets loose and is shifting, you may remove it and apply the headband as described above. Contact the office if any concerns.

PAIN MEDICATION

Most patients are pleasantly surprised by how limited their postoperative discomfort is. Tylenol extra strength is an effective pain reliever. Ice packs can also be helpful.

BLEEDING, BRUISING, SWELLING

Minor bleeding from the incision lines is normal after surgery and should subside within 24 hours. It is common to have more bruising and swelling on one side than the other. This will even out with time.

Bruising is the typical “black and blue” appearance to tissue after any surgery. There is a great variation in how much patients bruise, some bruising very little, some more. As noted in your preoperative instructions, Aspirin, blood thinners, anti-inflammatories, and vitamins can contribute to bruising and should be stopped for two weeks before surgery. These medications can be resumed the day after surgery. The bruising typically subsides within two weeks, but in some patients can last longer. As it dissolves and becomes more yellowish in colour it may appear to be “spreading”. This is normal and is no cause for alarm.

WOUND INFECTION

If the drainage from the wound becomes “soupy” and has an odour, or is associated with increasing redness, warmth, pain and swelling, then an infection may be occurring. Do not hesitate to phone the office if this happens. You will need to be seen as you may need to have antibiotics.

WOUND MASSAGE

As soon as the scar cream is being applied, 10 to 14 days after surgery, gentle massage of the incision lines should also be carried out. After 6 weeks, this gentle massage can become quite firm and vigorous, with deep rotary motions along the incision line and into the face itself. This firm massage helps to desensitize the scars, making them less painful, and reduces the normal scar thickness and lumpiness which is seen in a scar after surgery.

SCAR REDNESS

All scars initially are reddish and thickened. This is part of the normal healing process and eventually will smoothen out. It takes 6 to 9 months for the scars to undergo a full maturation process whereby they become flat and light in colour. Early tanning can cause permanent hyperpigmentation of the scar and of the surrounding areas, tanning should be avoided for 6 months post op.

MOBILITY

As a routine, it is important to be up and walking on the day of surgery. Prolonged periods of bed rest are discouraged. Within four weeks, full exercise activities can be resumed. The headband should be worn during any contact sport for at least 6 weeks.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR PROBLEMS, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT 705-523-7060. IF THERE IS AN URGENT SITUATION, AND WE ARE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, PLEASE GO TO YOUR CLOSEST EMERGENCY ROOM DEPARTMENT.