



PROFESSOREN MÜHLBAUER . Effnerstrasse 38 . D-81925 München

## Postoperative instructions: Facelift surgery:

Once your surgery is completed, please follow these instructions in order to heal properly and have a pleasant recovery.

### **TYPICAL POST-OPERATIVE SYMPTOMS**

Normal symptoms of facial rejuvenation include the following: Tightness or numbness of the cheeks, face and neck: Bruising and swelling beneath the eyes and a pale, swollen complexion. These are normal experiences as the skin, tissues and sensory nerves heal. Pain medication will help you cope with any discomfort.

*Skin firmness, hypersensitivity or lack of sensitivity:* This is normal and will gradually resolve over time.

*Shiny skin or any itchy feeling:* Swelling can cause the skin in treated areas to appear shiny. As the healing process advances, you may also have mild to severe itching. An antihistamine can help to alleviate severe, constant itchiness. If the skin becomes red and hot to the touch, please contact us as soon as possible.

*Asymmetry:* both sides of your face heal differently: One side of your face may look or feel quite different from the other in the days following surgery. This is normal.

*Pain:* You will experience a lightly burning pain along the suture lines immediately after the procedure. You will receive appropriate pain medication. Normally, the pain disappears during the next days. Consistent sharp pain should be reported to us immediately.

*Numbness* in face and ears is normal up to a year after surgery. With time the pinkish color made by the incisions will fade and the scars are going to be rather inconspicuous.

### **CALL THE HOSPITAL IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING (089 20 4000 145)**

A high fever, severe nausea and vomiting, continued dizziness or incoherent behavior.

Any pain that cannot be controlled by your pain medication.

Bright red skin that is hot to the touch.

Excessive bleeding or fluid seeping through the incisions.

A severely misshapen region anywhere on your face or neck or bruising that is localized to one specific point.

Severe lower extremity swelling and pain.



Chest pain and/or shortness of breath

**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:**

You will need to spend your first night at the hospital. After you have been discharged, please consider the following instructions:

**Rest, but not bed rest.** While rest is important in the early stages of healing, equally important is that you are ambulatory, meaning that you are walking under your own strength. Spend 5 minutes every 2 hours engaged in light walking indoors as you recover.

**Recline, do not lie down.** This will be more comfortable for you, and can reduce swelling. Always keep your head elevated. Do not bend forward or over.

**Diet:** You may have liquids by mouth once you have awakened from anesthesia. If you tolerate the liquids without significant nausea or vomiting then you may take solid foods but **avoid foods** that require a lot of chewing or wide mouth opening. If nausea is persistent, an anti-nausea medication may be prescribed for you. Some patients experience a mild sore throat for 2-3 days following the procedure. This usually does not interfere with swallowing.

**Keep your incisions clean.** Your incisions will seep fluid and some blood for a short time after surgery. The suture lines will be sealed during the operation. After removal of the drainage tubes on the first postoperative day you may wash your hair with commercial shampoo liquids every other day. Do not use a hot hair dryer. Do not remove any crusting near your stitches. Do not remove any staples, sutures or steri-strips.

**Do not smoke.** Smoking can greatly impair your safety prior to surgery and your ability to heal following surgery. You must not smoke throughout your entire healing process.

**Removal of sutures and clips:** Normally, we remove the sutures and clips after 7-10 days. You will receive an appointment for suture removal before your discharge.

**Washing and skin care:** You may wash your face and apply creams and make up except for the suture lines. Don't rub the skin. Hair dying is not allowed for at least 4 weeks after surgery.

**Sun, sport, swimming:** Normal exposure to the sun is allowed. Sunbathing is not allowed for the first 8 weeks. Outdoor and sport activities are possible after 4 -6 weeks. Bathing or swimming is allowed after the wound healing has been completed.

**Depression.** Your body (including your brain) is exposed to great amounts of physiological and mental stress after surgery. This is caused by a number of factors. Your hormone and steroid levels are elevated and you are taking medications (especially the narcotic and muscle relaxants) that directly affect your physiology and psychology. Your sleep cycle is probably disrupted, so you are likely sleep deprived. All of these factors, combined with the emotions and expectations you have invested in your surgery, can lead to a brief "let down" or "depression" after facial rejuvenation surgery. Some patients may subconsciously have expected



to feel or look better “instantly”, even though they rationally understood this would not be the case. Patients commonly question their decision to have cosmetic surgery during the first few weeks. As healing occurs, and as your physiology, stress level and sleep return to normal, these thoughts usually disappear. If you feel mildly depressed, understanding that this is a natural phase of the healing process may help you cope. If this happens to you, we want you to discuss it with us, especially if your depression is severe.

**Patience.** Please understand that it takes a minimum of 6-8 weeks to see the results of surgery coming into final form and, in many cases, your final results will not be fully realized for six months up to one year after surgery. It simply takes time for the swelling to resolve, your tissues to soften, and for scars to begin fading. This means that time is your ally and that swelling and scars will likely improve with time. Understanding this now will help temper your expectations, hone your patience and make for a more pleasurable recovery.

#### **THINGS NOT TO DO:**

Do not bend over, lift anything heavier than 5 lbs. or engage in vigorous exercise.

Do not smoke. Do not drink alcohol.

Do not bump your face or neck – beware of restless/playful children, bedmates, and pets. Do not put any pressure on your face or neck when you sleep.

Avoid direct sunlight as much as possible for 6 weeks, then use sunblock with at least SPF 30 whenever outside.

Do not use hot tub or sauna for at least 6 weeks

Do not take Aspirin as it may cause bleeding. Ask us when to resume other routine medications.

Do not compare your progress with other patients, as everyone heals differently.

#### **RESUMING ACTIVITIES:**

1. *Driving* – 1 week

2. *Alcohol* – 2 weeks

3. *Smoking* – 1 month

4. *Return to work*– usually 2-3 weeks (sometimes sooner)

5. *Hair coloring or permanent* – 5-6 weeks

6. *Recreational swimming, jogging, tennis, weight lifting, aerobics, cycling, sex, etc.* – 3 weeks

7. *Competitive sports, contact sports, skiing, diving* – 6 weeks

8. **Anything else – please ask us!**