



Before and After Your Facial Plastic Surgery

This handout gives important instructions to follow before and after your surgery. Please ask your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

Before Surgery

Medicines and Supplements

- **Stop** taking all aspirin and other blood-thinning products 2 weeks before your surgery date.
- Review the list (below) that contains other medicines to avoid before surgery. Avoiding these medicines will help your surgeon control bleeding during the surgery. If these medicines are not stopped, your surgery may need to be rescheduled.

Check-in Time

Check-in time for your surgery is determined the day before surgery. You will receive a phone call the night before surgery with your check-in time. If your surgery is on a Monday, you will receive this phone call the Friday before. If you do not hear from the pre-surgery nurse by 5 p.m., please call 206-598-6334.

Fasting

- **Do NOT eat or drink 8 hours before your surgery.** It is very important that you have nothing to eat (including chewing gum, breath mints, etc.) or drink 8 hours before your surgery.
- If you take any prescription medicine, please check with the pre-anesthesia clinic for instructions on how to take your prescription medicine on the day of surgery. If these instructions are not followed, your surgery may have to be rescheduled.

Day of Surgery

- On the day of surgery, wear comfortable clothing that is easy to put on and take off. We recommend a button-up shirt or blouse.
- You will go home the same day as your operation. **If you are having general anesthesia, you will need a driver to take you home on the day of your surgery.**

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- **You will need to have a responsible adult care for you at home for at least the first 24 hours.** We recommend that you arrange to have someone care for you over the first 2 to 3 days.

After Surgery

Safety Precautions

Medicine given to you during and after your operation will affect you. For 24 hours after your surgery, do **not**:

- Drive or travel alone
- Use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers
- Be responsible for the care of another person

Incision Care

- On the first day after your surgery, remove the gauze dressing and clean your incision. If you have a yellow gauze pack on top of the wound, keep that in place.
- Prepare a solution that is half hydrogen peroxide and half water. Dip Q-tips into this solution and gently clean around your sutures (if you have them) at the base of your nose. **Do this 4 times every day.**
- After each cleaning, apply the ointment your provider gave you to the incision. Keeping the incision moist with ointment will help prevent scabs from forming and will help your incision heal.
- You may shower the day after surgery, but avoid soaking your wound or yellow gauze dressing (if you have this dressing).

Swelling

- Your bruising and swelling will peak at 48 to 72 hours after surgery. To help lessen these symptoms, begin to elevate your head as soon as you go home.
- At night, sleep in a recliner if possible, or put 2 to 3 pillows under your head in bed.
- Keep elevating your head for 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery.

Cold, Wet Eye Compresses

If any work was done around your eyes, you may have some swelling and black eyes. Start using cold, wet compresses on your eyes the day of surgery. Continue using them for the next 48 to 72 hours.

To make cold compresses:

- Soak 4-inch by 4-inch gauze pads in cold ice water.
- Place the soaked gauze pads onto both cheeks and over each eye.
- Keep them in place for 20 to 30 minutes, then remove them for 20 to 30 minutes.
- Do this every hour while you are awake.

You may also use frozen peas or ice packs in ziplock bags, but do **not** place these directly on your eyes. Use them over the top of moist gauze.

After 72 hours, the compresses will not affect inflammation and bruising. But, if new inflammation occurs when you start to return to a normal routine, compresses at night will help.

Nasal Splints

If you had cartilage taken from your nose, you may have internal nasal splints in place. The internal nasal splints are large plastic splints sutured (sewn) to your *septum*, the cartilage wall between your nostrils. These splints keep pressure on your septum so a *hematoma* (blood clot) does not form. These splints will stay in place until your first follow-up visit.

Nasal Irrigation

Irrigating your nose after surgery will keep it moist and help keep scabs from forming.

- **Use ONLY saline to spray into your nose after surgery.** You will be given a saline irrigation bottle at the time of your surgery.
- Begin doing nasal irrigation the morning after surgery. Repeat at least 4 to 5 times a day.
- You may also use Ocean or Ayr brand nasal spray, which you can buy at a drugstore without a prescription.

Afrin Spray

Afrin is a decongestant spray. It works by constricting blood vessels in your body.

You will first use this spray while you are in the hospital on the day of your surgery. Using Afrin before surgery will reduce bleeding during surgery.

Afrin can also be used after surgery. But, it should only be used if you have extreme congestion or a lot of bleeding. Afrin should not be used for more than 3 days in a row.

Ear Dressing

If you had cartilage taken from your ear, you might have a cotton ball in your ear where the cartilage was removed.

- **Do NOT try to remove the cotton ball.** It is sewn to your ear. It will be removed at your first follow-up visit.
- Keep the cotton ball dry when you shower.
- Apply ointment to the cotton ball 4 times a day to keep it moist.

Antibiotic Medicine

- You will be given a prescription for an antibiotic medicine on the day of your history and physical.
- **Start taking this antibiotic on your day of surgery, right after the surgery is done.** If you have nausea after surgery, you can wait until the next day to start.
- Take all of the medicine in the dose prescribed until it is gone.

Pain Medicine

- You will be given a prescription for a narcotic pain medicine on the day of your history and physical.
- Take this pain medicine as needed after surgery for any discomfort.
- To avoid stomach upset, eat a light snack before taking this medicine.

What to Avoid After Surgery

Activity

Activity increases your blood pressure. An increase in blood pressure will increase inflammation. After your surgery:

- **Avoid strenuous activity for 1½ to 2 weeks.**
- Avoid bending over and lifting heavy objects for 2 weeks.
- Do not play contact sports for 6 weeks.

Blowing Your Nose

If you had a nasal procedure, **do not blow your nose for 2 weeks** after surgery. Blowing your nose can start a nosebleed, which will disrupt any grafting that may be in place.

Constipation

The pain medicine given to you can slow down your digestive system. To avoid constipation:

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day.
- Eat fruits, vegetables, prunes, and other high-fiber foods.
- You may use over-the-counter stool softeners as needed.

Questions?

Call 206-598-4022

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call Otolaryngology at 206-598-7535.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the surgeon on call for Otolaryngology to be paged.

Wearing Glasses

If your surgery affected the structure of your nose, do **not** wear any type of glasses. Placing even a light weight on your nose could move the bone or any grafting material.

If you must wear glasses, tape them to your forehead, without allowing the frame to touch your nose, for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.

Sun Exposure

The skin on your nose will be very sensitive to sunlight after your surgery. **It is important to protect your skin for 1 year after your surgery.** Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, wear hats, and avoid sunlight as much as possible.

Medicines

- **Do NOT take aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), vitamin E, or herbal supplements for 2 weeks after surgery,** unless your doctor has told you it is OK for you to start or restart taking them. These medicines can cause bleeding.
- **You will be given these medicines when you are discharged from the hospital after surgery:**
 - Antibiotic
 - Pain medicine
 - Nasal saline rinse bottle (for procedures involving nasal work)
- Follow directions on all discharge medicines.

Follow-Up Visit

Your first follow-up visit is on: _____

When to Call the Doctor

Call Otolaryngology at 206-598-7535 if you have any of these symptoms:

- A lot of discomfort
- Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
- Changes in your vision
- Severe nausea or vomiting

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Pub. 11/2010, 04/2011
Rev. 04/2011

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