



BOICE-WILLIS CLINIC  
**PLASTIC  
SURGERY**

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**INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR FACELIFT SURGERY**

*Please follow some basic guidelines in order to maximize results and to minimize any risks or complications in your post-operative recovery.*

***Before your surgery:***

- **Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke.** Cigarette smoking impairs wound healing, blood flow, and respiratory secretions. Do **not** use nicotine patch or gum at this time.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol can be a blood thinner, so we recommend no drinking for two weeks prior to surgery and for two weeks following surgery.
- **Avoid aspirin, aspirin-containing products, and anti-inflammatory products.** All of these products may increase bleeding during surgery. Since many over-the-counter medications contain aspirin, please read labels carefully and refer to the comprehensive list of medications to avoid. *If aspirin is being prescribed for a heart condition or other medical conditions, please notify us for further instructions.*
- **Scrub face with antibacterial cleanser prior to surgery.**
- **Have a support system in place.** Make arrangements for a responsible adult to take you to and from the hospital or surgery center and remain with you for the first 24 hours.
- **Do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight the day prior to surgery.** This includes water, chewing gum, and mints. On the morning of surgery, you can brush your teeth but do not swallow any of the water. Prescription medication may be taken with a small sip of water on the morning of surgery.
- **Drink extra water the day before surgery** (but be sure to stop drinking by midnight!) A well-hydrated body is less likely to experience nausea after anesthesia.
- **Get prescriptions filled prior to surgery.** You will be given antibiotics and pain medications at your pre-operative visit, get them filled in advance of your surgery.
- **Follow guidelines outlined in Dr. Szymanski's peri-operative protocol.** These will all help to decrease the amount of swelling and bruising from your surgery.
- **Get proper rest the day before surgery.**

***The day of surgery:***

- Wear button down shirt so nothing tight has to be pulled over your head.
- Do not wear any jewelry or make-up.
- Please arrive to the hospital or surgery center at the appropriate scheduled time.

***Once you are home:***

*You are now on the road to recovery. It is very important that you pay close attention to following the instructions listed below. These will help to assure improved wound healing and decrease the risk of postoperative complications. Following the instructions will help make your recovery easier.*

- **Take your antibiotics and pain medication as prescribed.** Try to have some food in your stomach when taking medications to avoid nausea. If you experience any itching, rashes, or respiratory difficulties, please notify the office, as you may be allergic to one of the medications. Start to wean off the pain medications once symptoms improve. For minor discomfort you may take Tylenol®, if not allergic.
- **Elevation of head is important to limit swelling.** Two pillows at a minimum should be used to keep head propped up and slightly back. It is helpful to also put a pillow behind shoulders to ensure that head is back as well as elevated. For the first night or two, protect your pillow with a towel, as there may be a small amount of spotting from your incisions.
- **Avoid strenuous activities and any motion that causes blood rush to the head.** Activities such as bending over, lifting, power walks or other strenuous exercise could provoke bleeding and lead to increased bruising. This restriction should last for a minimum of two weeks, and activities should be resumed gradually.
- **Movement and casual walking is an important part of restoring proper circulation and breathing.** Walking “wakes-up” all your body systems, it improves circulation, encourages breathing and helps move gas along the digestive tract. Take advantage of trips to the bathroom for short walks around the house, but be careful not to overexert yourself in the beginning.
- **There are sutures underneath the skin that are absorbable and sutures on the skin surface that will be removed.** Sutures are removed in the office after 5-7 days. If any incisions are covered with steri-strips (tapes), please leave in place and they will be removed or changed by the MD or physician assistant.
- **Discoloration, swelling, and bruising usually peaks at 36 hours, then gradually fades.** Most patients will be clear of any discoloration by two weeks. If at this time there is any residual discoloration, our esthetician will instruct you in the use of camouflage make-up. Adhering to vitamin supplement regimens has been shown to help in decreasing the amount of bruising.
- **You may shower 24 hours after your surgery.** Be gentle when washing over incision areas, and use cool to warm water. Shampoo and conditioner may be used, and you can gently comb out tangles. Be careful using a hair dryer because you will have increased numbness of the face and you want to avoid burns from the heat. Permanent waves and hair coloration should be avoided for at least 6 weeks after surgery.

- **Driving is usually permitted after 1-2 weeks after surgery as long as you are not taking pain medication.** We do not want you driving if you are having any discomfort or if swelling is affecting your vision. Always remember that you are “under the influence” when taking prescription pain medication. Do not drive until after we advise you at your first post-operative visit.
- **Protect incisions with good sunblock for the first three months.** Scars will tend to redden more during the initial period, so they need to be protected from sun exposure strong sunblock. Avoid tanning beds for the first three months as well.
- **Remember to eat healthy and include protein in your diet.** Protein is essential to the healing process, and it is best to avoid foods with lots of sodium as they will increase swelling. Continue Vitamedica supplements as directed if purchased.
- **Do not hesitate to call the office if you have any questions regarding your recovery.** Observe your skin and incision carefully, and contact us if you experience anything that seems concerning to you. Look for any redness, puffiness, unusual drainage, opening of an incision, or an increased temperature (over 100°). Persistent nausea, sudden increase in swelling, bruising or pain should be reported to our office.
- **Come to your scheduled follow-up visits.** Call the office to schedule a follow-up appointment, if this was not previously arranged. We closely follow patients after their surgery to ensure proper healing and to reinforce postoperative instructions to make this the best possible surgical experience.