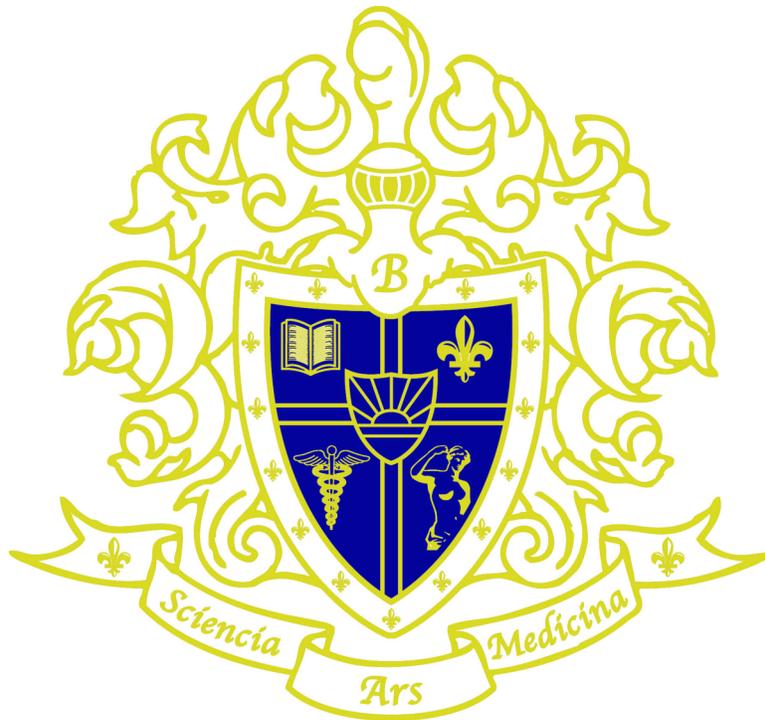


# POST OPERATIVE BLEPHAROPLASTY INSTRUCTIONS



**Beeson Cosmetic Surgery**

## **Introduction**

The following instructions are based on experience with hundreds of blepharoplasty operations. They will answer practically every question that may arise regarding the "do's" and "don'ts" after surgery. You and your family and caregivers should read them several times so that you may become thoroughly familiar with them. Attempt to follow them faithfully: those who do so generally have the smoothest post-operative course and obtain the best results.

## **Swelling**

Every operation, no matter how minor, is accompanied by swelling of the surrounding tissues. The amount varies from person to person. However, it always seems more prominent around eyes, since these tissues are looser and even a small amount of swelling makes our eyelid features appear distorted. Sometimes the swelling becomes greater the second to third day after your operation. Sometimes it is more pronounced on one side. The swelling itself is not serious and is not an indication that something is going wrong with your operation.

## **Discoloration**

It is not unusual to have varying amounts of discoloration around your eyes and into your cheeks. Like the swelling, it may become more pronounced, after the first day, but remember this is temporary.

## **Pain**

There is usually little actual pain following a blepharoplasty, but you may experience a bruised sensation as a result of the swelling. As is usually the case with such things, this seems worse at night and when one becomes nervous.

Unfortunately, the prescribed pain medications often cause sensations of light-headedness, particularly in the immediate post-operative period and, consequently, seem to make recovery more tedious. Therefore, it is better to try the application of cold compresses before resorting to drugs. If this is not effective, we recommend Extra Strength Tylenol, if there is no history of sensitivity to these products. If the pain is severe, notify the nurse and stronger medication can be ordered for you.

## **Ice Compresses**

Wash towels (not ice bag) dipped in ice water, wrung out lightly and applied over your eyes continuously (changing every twenty minutes) for the first 48 hours and then several times daily during the first week can dramatically help reduce swelling, discomfort, and discoloration.

## **Elevate Head of Bed**

To help minimize swelling, the head of your bed should be elevated 30-40 degrees. Sleep with the head of your bed elevated for two weeks. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of it. Sleep on your back. Try placing a pillow under each arm to help keep you from turning. Try not to roll over onto your face.

## **Medications**

During your surgery you will be given medications to help reduce your swelling, prophylactic antibiotics, and anti-nausea medications. Specific medications for pain are prescribed for you. Take these medications only if you feel they are needed. It is not uncommon to experience some dryness and irritation to your eyes after surgery. You can use an over-the-counter eye lubricant to help keep your eyes moist and comfortable. We recommend Gen Teal Dry Eye Relief Lubricant Eye Gel at night for the first several days after surgery. Our nurses can show you and your care giver have to place the ointment in your eyes.

## **Getting Out of Bed**

We usually recommend you remain in bed during the first 12 hours following surgery, after which you may sit in a chair, walk to the bathroom, or walk around your room. It is important to rest your eyes as much as possible after blepharoplasty surgery. For that reason, it is important to minimize watching TV, reading, or using the computer for the first several days following your surgery. It is best to listen to your favorite music play list or your favorite audible book.

## **Stool**

Avoid **straining** at the stool. We recommend that patients use MiraLAX or another over the counter stool softener, as long as they are not sensitive to the medication, for the first 1-2 weeks following surgery to avoid constipation. Tell the nurse if you need a stronger laxative or stool softener, and we will prescribe one for you.

## **After Surgery**

If you live in another city, we prefer you to stay in the Indianapolis area your first night and preferably for 2-3 days after surgery.

## **Swelling**

As previously explained, your eyes and face will remain swollen with varying amounts of discoloration for several days. The main thing to remember is that such swelling eventually subsides. You can help expedite reduction of swelling by:

- 1) **Stay Up** (sitting, standing, walking around). **Important!** Of course, you should rest when you're tired.
- 2) **Avoid Bending Over, Straining or Lifting** over 5 pounds for two weeks. Besides aggravating swelling, this may raise your blood pressure and start hemorrhage.
- 3) **Avoid Hitting or Bumping Your Face.** It is wise not to pick up small children, and is best if you should sleep alone for one week after your operation.
- 4) **Sleep With The Head of Your Bed Elevated** for 2 weeks after your operation. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of it. Try not to roll on your face. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45-degree angle to be more comfortable.
- 5) **Avoid Straining at the Stool.** If you need a laxative, we will prescribe one for you.
- 6) **Avoid Excessive Sunning** of the face for one month. Ordinary exposure is not harmful, but be sure to wear sunscreen with SPF of 30 or greater and avoid getting burned.

## **Discoloration**

Sometimes the discoloration may become more obvious after you have been discharged. It usually lasts not more than two weeks, all the while decreasing in intensity. The measures previously described that help the swelling to subside will also help the discoloration. Unfortunately, there is no medication, which will cause it to disappear rapidly - only "tincture of time."

You can camouflage the discoloration to some extent by using Dermablend make-up. It may be applied with a moist sponge. After it dries, a second layer may be applied. It can be removed with water. L'Oréal Color Correction Kits can also be used. Our nurses can help you with specific make-up camouflaging techniques. Do not apply make-up over the incisions themselves for several days after the sutures have been removed. However, you can bring it up to the line of the incisions.

## **Pain**

If you should have discomfort around your eyes, try the application of cold compresses before resorting to stronger drugs. If this is not effective, you may take the pain medication, which we prescribed, for you. Under no circumstances should ASPIRIN or medications containing aspirin or salicylates be taken without first consulting us. Be sure to check the labels of any pain medications you already have or any you purchase from the drug store. If Extra-Strength Tylenol doesn't help, then you may try the prescribed pain medication given to you at the time of your pre-surgery visit.

## **Hemorrhage**

If hemorrhage does occur, go to bed, elevate the head, apply ice compresses over the eyes, and report it by telephone. You will probably be told to return to the office.

## **Temperature**

It is normal to have a slight elevation in body temperature as part of the normal healing process. Generally, this will be 100 degrees or slightly higher. Patients will often think they have an increased temperature because they feel warm, but in reality they do not. To be sure, you should measure your temperature by mouth, and report any persistent temperature greater than 100 degrees.

## **Weakness**

It is not unusual after a person has an anesthetic or any type of operation for them to feel weak, have palpitations break out in "cold sweats," or get dizzy. This gradually clears up in a few days without medication.

## **Insomnia**

When there is too much difficulty in sleeping in the post-operative period, we will prescribe a sedative. It should be remembered that such drugs also tend to make some people feel light-headed and weak and should be taken only if needed. They can also lead to more swelling and bruising and cannot be taken in conjunction with most prescribed pain medications.

## **Depression**

Because a person is so "keyed-up" before the operation, there is usually a mental and physical let-down afterward. It is not unusual for the patient to feel depressed and tired following surgery. If this happens, it is not abnormal.

It is not unusual for an individual to go through a period of mild depression after cosmetic surgery because, no matter how much they wanted the operation beforehand and how much they were told about what to expect post-operatively; they are shocked when they see their face swollen and discolored.

Be realistic and realize that this is a very temporary condition, which will subside shortly. The best "treatment" consists of busying one's self with the details of post-operative care and trying to divert one's attention to other thoughts – listen to your favorite music play list or books on tape.

### **Diet and Alcoholic Beverages**

Immediately following surgery, you are encouraged to take a moderate amount of liquids to avoid dehydration. As always, a well-balanced diet in moderation is recommended for those interested in maintaining their best physical condition.

Alcoholic beverages are discouraged during the first three weeks after surgery. A social drink would be acceptable, but enough alcohol to make one feel "relaxed" also lowers one's sense of awareness, which is needed to avoid disturbing the area of the surgery. Alcohol can also lead to increase bruising and swelling.

### **Your Medications**

When discharged, continue taking all the medicine that you were taking prior to surgery, unless otherwise directed. Take these as pre directions given you until the supply is exhausted. These prescriptions need not be refilled. Continue taking the prescribed multi-vitamins and increase vitamin C post-operatively.

### **Resuming Activities**

1) **Wearing Glasses and Contact Lens:** EYE GLASSES may be immediately after surgery. CONTACT LENSES may be inserted 2 weeks after surgery.

2) **Hair and Face Care:** Use cotton balls to **wash the face** gently with a mild soap (Basis, Neutrogena) 1-2 times daily during the first week; use a gentle upward motion.

You may shower and shampoo the day after surgery.

Avoid make up on the eyelid incisions for 1 week.

Avoid mascara to eye lashes for 1 week and avoid artificial lashes for 3 weeks following surgery.

Do not TWEEZE THE EYEBROWS for 3 weeks.

3) **Household Activities:** You may be up and around the house with your usual activities, except those specifically outlined previously.

4) **Pull-Over Clothing:** You should wear clothing that fastens either in the front or the back rather than the type that must be pulled over the head for one week.

5) **Athletics:** No swimming, strenuous athletic activity or exercises for 2 weeks.

**6) Returning To Work and Resuming Social Activities:** When you should return to work depends on the amount of physical activity and public contact your job involves and also the amount of swelling and discoloration you develop. The average patient may return to work or go out socially 1 week after surgery, when these factors are minimal. However, everyone heals differently, so you will have to play this by ear! Do not drive for one week.

### **Your Incisions**

After all stitches have been removed, the incisions will appear a deep pink color. There will be varying amounts of swelling in and around the actual incisions themselves. With the passage of time, the pink will become white, the firmness of the incisions will soften, and they will become less noticeable. Each individual varies with respect to healing, but it takes approximately one year before we have complete healing

### **Daily Care**

- 1) Go over your suture lines 3-4 times daily with hydrogen peroxide on a Q-tip. Apply a small amount of Bacitracin to the suture lines.
- 2) The first day after surgery you may shower and shampoo. Do not be afraid to get the sutures around your eyes wet when showering. In fact, this is encouraged.
- 3) Report any excessive bleeding that persists after you have applied cold compresses and gentle pressure to the area for 20 minutes.
- 4) Report any signs of infection such as high fever, excessive swelling, redness, increased pain, decreased vision or drainage.
- 5) Report any excessive bleeding or extreme bulging black and blue swelling. (It is not uncommon to have some mild oozing from the incision lines, which can be treated with cold compresses. However, if bleeding is excessive please call)
- 6) Notify us if there is marked difference in swelling of one eye versus the other.
- 7) It is normal to have some blurriness, but if there is marked change in vision, please call us immediately.
- 8) Avoid taking medications on an empty stomach.
- 9) Rest your eyes as much as possible. Avoid the television, computer, and reading as much as possible for the first 3-5 days after surgery.
- 10) Use eye lubricant and eye rest to avoid dry eyes or eye irritation – realize your vision will be blurry after using the eye lubricant.

## **Your First Week Post Operative Office Visit**

There is no reason to be anxious or worry about what will happen at your first week postoperative visit to our office. We will check the progress of your healing. Many of the skin sutures will have already dissolved themselves. We will gently remove the remaining sutures with small delicate instruments to minimize any discomfort. If you are especially anxious, you may take a pain pill prior to arriving at the office.

### **Finally**

Remember the things you were told before your operation, namely:

1) The face and eyes will appear swollen and there will be varying amounts of discoloration. This swelling will subside to a great extent within 1-2 weeks. However, it will take 6-8 weeks for all the swelling to disappear and for your eyes to reach their final contour.

2) The discoloration will gradually disappear over a period of 7-14 days in most case. We have yet to encounter a case where it has persisted permanently!

3) Report

- Temperature elevation
- Sudden swelling or discoloration
- Hemorrhage
- Discharge from incisions or any evidence of infection
- Development of any drug reaction
- Visual changes or eye irritation

Most important, BE PATIENT during the healing process!

If you have any questions or concerns, you are urged to call me.