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After Eyelid and Brow Surgery

You should be up walking with assistance on the evening of surgery and as much as possible daily thereafter. Try to ambulate each hour while awake. Do not spend hours at a time lying or sitting and avoid crossing your legs at all times. These practices will minimize the chance of developing blood clots in the legs (deep venous thrombosis or DVT), a potentially very serious condition.

In the first twenty-four hours post-operatively you should rest as much as possible while applying cold compresses. Keeping your head elevated is necessary in the first week after surgery. When lying down, lie on your back with your head propped up on two pillows.

Cold compresses should be applied to the eyes for the first 24 hours after surgery to help minimize swelling and bruising. Cold compresses can be applied in various ways. For example, soaking 4x4 gauze pads in ice chilled water and placing them on the eyelids; placing a wet 4x4 gauze on the eyes then placing ice in latex surgical gloves over the gauze; or even store bought compresses found in first-aid aisle at your local pharmacy all work well. Doing this longer than 24 hours is not beneficial. You will need someone to help you do this at first. If a family member or friend is not available, we can arrange for a nurse.

Postoperative bruising and swelling will begin immediately after surgery. Even after the first twenty four hours swelling and bruising will continue to develop. All swelling and bruising will begin to subside after five days, although residual bruising can last up to two weeks and subtle swelling for up to two months. After brow surgery, it is common to have numbness in portions of the forehead and scalp. Medication used during surgery may cause blurred vision. This usually clears within 24 to 48 hours, but sometimes lasts as long as a week. It is normal for your eyes to itch or burn after surgery. It is normal for the skin surrounding your eyes to feel numb or tight. This will eventually resolve but may take several months.

Continue to take the Arnica and Bromelain for two weeks. Do not take drugs on your "Medications to Avoid" list for two weeks. Remember not to smoke at all for at least three weeks although abstaining for six weeks is optimal for proper wound healing. Begin taking your antibiotic when you get home from surgery and continue as directed for one week. Take your prescription pain medication every four to six hours as needed but switch to Tylenol as soon as possible. Constipation can occur after surgery due in part to narcotic pain medications. Increase your intake of water, fruits, and fiber to help prevent this. Milk of Magnesia or Colace (both available at pharmacies over the counter) are often helpful if constipation persists. Substituting Tylenol (acetaminophen) for your prescription pain medication will also help prevent constipation.

The eyelid incisions may ooze for the first two days. If you had a lower blepharoplasty, you may accumulate small amounts of bloody discharge in the eye. You can gently remove this with a Q-tip at the corner of the eye. It is not necessary to flush or irrigate the eyes, although Natural Tears (Hypotears) can be used as needed if the eyes feel irritated or dry. This may be purchased over the counter at most pharmacies.

It is important to minimize the amount that you use your eyes in the first week after surgery. Limit the amount of time you spend in front of the computer or wireless devices. You should not expect to read or watch television comfortably for several days. If you choose to read, make sure you hold the reading material up at eye level. If you watch TV, be sure to rest your eyes frequently. All of these activities can cause strain or stress to the eyes and may hinder the healing process.

Short walks are encouraged as soon as the day after surgery but you should not do this alone for the first few times. When you go outside, your eyes may tear easily and become light sensitive. Therefore, you will need to wear sunglasses and avoid direct sunlight for the first few days. Eyeglasses may be worn immediately after surgery. Contact lenses may be worn beginning ten days after surgery. They may feel uncomfortable at first.

You may shower forty-eight hours post-operatively. You may wash your face other than the eyes starting five days after surgery, but do not splash water directly onto your face. You may wash your hair in the shower two days after surgery. If you have also had brow surgery you should wait three days to wash your hair. Do not massage your scalp. All motions with your finger tips should be from front to back, being careful of the surgical clips. When combing your hair go from front to back. A hair dryer should only be used on a cold setting at this time. You should not use rollers or hair clips for two weeks. Hold your head back and take care to not get shampoo in your eyes. Gently blot your eyes dry if they get wet. Do not wash your hair by bending over a sink.

After a week, you may begin to sleep on your side and move about normally. You may return to work, drive, or fly after one week. You should defer sexual relations for two weeks. After two weeks you may gradually resume light exercise such as slow walking, using an exercise bike, or light weight lifting (5-10 lbs.). Do not bend over at the waist for two weeks after surgery. Instead, bend at the knees while keeping the back straight. At three weeks you can resume most normal exercises but heavy weight lifting, impact exercises, yoga, pilates, and contact or ball sports should be avoided for at least six weeks.

Cover-up for residual bruising may be applied to the cheeks and lower eyelids seven days after surgery. Apply camouflage makeup to the cheeks and lower eyelids with a gentle, upward motion. Regular eyelid makeup, such as eye shadow or mascara, may also be applied beginning one week after surgery. Hypoallergenic types are best. If your eyes itch or swell discontinue using makeup until this resolves. It is important to remove all makeup thoroughly at the end of the day using an upward motion on the lower eyelids and a sideways motion on the upper eyelids. When removing makeup, use a makeup remover in order to minimize pulling on the eyes. Do not tweeze your eyebrows for three weeks. If you had laser or chemical peel, follow

the skin care instructions on your “After Laser Surgery” instructions.

Private Duty Nurses

Private duty nurses are available to provide personalized postoperative care. This is optional following eyelid surgery. The private duty nurses that we use are registered nurses who have been hand selected by Dr. Hidalgo. They are independent contractors and charge a separate fee for their services (\$75 an hour). The private duty nurse will work a minimum of an eight hour shift.

Your nurse will monitor your surgical site, administer ice compresses, ensure proper positioning, and assist you with your medications, ointments and other needs. If you do not have someone to stay with you overnight, you will need a private duty nurse.

Your private duty nurse will meet you at the office when you are ready to leave to escort you to home or a hotel. Plans for transportation should be made prior to surgery (e.g., car service, family car or taxi). If you plan to recuperate outside of Manhattan, you must provide car service to and from the city for your private duty nurse. Traveling time is an additional one hour fee. Please be aware that private duty nurse arrangements need to be made well in advance of your surgical date. We ask that you give 48 hours notice if any changes need to be made in scheduling. You may schedule a nurse during your preoperative appointment.

If you have any questions please call the office and ask for one of our nurses.

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