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FACIAL COSMETIC SURGERY & ORAL MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR EYELID SURGERY
Dr. David P. Mueller

Eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty) can be one of the most rejuvenating and rewarding facial cosmetic procedures. As the success of eyelid surgery depends on both the surgeon and patient, the best surgeon will not achieve a satisfactory result if the patient does not adhere to and follow postoperative care instructions.

Your eyelid procedure may involve upper and / or lower eyelids and may also include laser resurfacing of the lid skin. In addition, a brow / forehead lift may also be planned. Bruising and swelling are common in eyelid surgery, but serious complications are rare. Bleeding behind the eye after surgery is a serious but extremely rare complication. This should not be confused with mild oozing from the suture lines. The main reason bleeding occurs after surgery is from patients elevating their blood pressure by bending, lifting, straining, coughing, sneezing, straining on the toilet and other strenuous activities. Patients may have swelling and blurred vision, but should be able to see light and count fingers. If you experience severe, stabbing pain behind the eye, please call Dr. Mueller immediately.

To avoid complications from bleeding, you must absolutely refrain from activities that may increase blood pressure or bleeding for ten (10) days following surgery. Failure to do so may affect your vision! We require our patients to be “couch potatoes” for the first 48 hours following surgery. We want you to keep your head elevated for a week and have someone take care of you.

You must also refrain from taking any drugs which may prolong bleeding. Remember even one (1) aspirin is very dangerous for bleeding around the eye. Some homeopathic herbs may also elevate bleeding times and should not be used before or immediately after eyelid surgery. Ginko, Garlic and Ginseng as well as high doses of Vitamin E can increase bleeding. We will provide you with a list of those medications and herbs which you may not take for three (2) weeks prior to your procedure.

After your surgery, we will recover you in our office for about 1 hour. During that time, we will place cold compresses on your eyes. This will make you feel comfortable as well as lessen swelling and bleeding. We ask that you continue this for 48 hours once you get home. You can either place ice packs gently over your eyes or simply take a large bowl and wash it and fill it with ice cubes and water along with several wash cloths. Place one wash cloth over the eyes, and when it becomes warm, replace it with another cold cloth.

If you also had a laser resurfacing of the eyelids or face, be sure to keep a thin coat of Aquaphor or Vaseline on the treated areas and reapply it frequently. The lasered skin should always have a fine coat of Aquaphor or Vaseline for 5 – 6 days.

It is fine to shower the day after your surgery. Be gentle when washing and drying the face as to not disrupt the lasered skin or sutures. If you have had a brow lift or facelift, you will have sutures or staples in the hairline incisions. Be careful not to snag them with a comb or brush. Wipe the suture lines gently with a Q-tip with peroxide and apply Neosporin or other antibiotic ointment twice a day. This is to prevent clotting and scabbing to provide a better surgical scar.

Take all medications as prescribed and directed by Dr. Mueller and call if you have any questions.

Some patients will experience dry eyes. You may purchase non-prescription eye drops at your local pharmacy. We recommend Refresh Eye Drops for daytime and Refresh Plus for night time use. Placing a drop in each eye every several hours will hydrate and refresh your eyes.

As your healing progresses, bruising can go from blue to purple to yellow and spread around the eyes. Some patients will have the “white of the eye” turn red or pink. And this is not a problem. It will resolve. Some patients may also experience what looks like blistering of the eyeball. This is just swelling of the conjunctiva and will resolve as well. Call Dr. Mueller if you have concerns.

If you have sutures, you will need to return in 5 or 6 days to have them removed. This appointment is generally made on the day of your surgery. Eyelid incisions heal in a very cosmetic fashion but usually look very “ragged” and irregular for the first several weeks. They may look uneven or bumpy, but generally heal better than any scar on the body. Don’t be concerned about the scar for the first several weeks. Sometimes the eyelids do not close all of the way following surgery. This is not unusual and will heal rapidly.

Most people pay little attention to their eyelids until they have an operation. Don’t be too picky for the first several weeks or worry unnecessarily. Relax and let the healing take place. Remember you will look worse before you look better. 99.9% of patients heal with excellent results. Minor nips or tucks are sometimes required to refine a result in some patients. Dr. Mueller is on call and can be reached at 757-406-7400 with any questions or concerns.