

Post-Operative Instructions

Date/Time of Bandage removal: _____

Post-Operative Check (*optional*): _____

Suture removal: _____

Emergency phone number: _____

MANAGING DISCOMFORT & NAUSEA

After your surgery, before you leave the office, your nurse will have given you an envelope containing your post-operative instructions, an appointment for the next day for bandage removal, an appointment for suture removal in 7-10 days, a roll of gauze, and small envelopes containing your medications. **The envelopes numbered 1, 2 and 3** are your medications for any discomfort or pain.

- Envelope #1 contains **Tylenol #3** which contains codeine that may cause constipation.
- Envelope #2 contains **Vicodin**. Please follow the instructions below.
- Envelope #3 contains **Percocet** (may also cause constipation). Please follow the instructions below.
- Envelope containing **Ambien**, for sleep, if needed (1/2 to 1 tablet).
- Envelope containing anti-nausea pills.

Take **Tylenol #3** as directed on the envelope if you experience any discomfort. If it continues after 30-45 minutes, take **Vicodin**, **but not before taking the anti-nausea pills 15 minutes before the Vicodin**. Although it would be unusual, if you are **still** experiencing discomfort 30-45 minutes later, take the **Percocet** as directed on the package. Continue taking the medications in 3-4 hour intervals as they will help control the discomfort. Even if you experience no pain prior to bedtime, we recommend you take a **Vicodin** for overnight comfort.

The anti-nausea pills should not be taken more than once every 4-6 hours. Some patients will be directed to “skip” the **Tylenol #3**, if their tolerance to medications is higher than average. Patients should not drive a car while taking any of the medications listed above. Your reflexes will be impaired and driving could be dangerous. For any mild discomfort you may have after the first few days, you may also want to purchase some **extra-strength Tylenol**.

NOURISHMENT

After your surgery when you leave our office, it is very important that you have a good meal (dinner) and drink plenty of fluids, especially water, during the course of the evening.

THE HEAD BANDAGE

Please do not attempt to lift or check under your bandage. It is important that the bandage maintains firm, even pressure on the donor and recipient areas and not shift overnight. You will have been given a long piece of gauze. Before you go to sleep for the evening, please wrap it over the top of the bandage and tie it underneath your chin to hold it in place and to keep it from shifting.

SHOULD BLEEDING OCCUR

Significant bleeding **rarely** occurs after surgery. If bleeding should occur after regular office hours: Apply firm, steady pressure over the bleeding area for 10-15 minutes

without lifting the bandage. If the blood spot on the bandage continues to increase in size, call the phone number listed on the front cover of this pamphlet. **Please do not take any fish oil, aspirin, or medications containing aspirin** for two days following your surgery. **Please do not** drink any alcohol while on medication.

BANDAGE REMOVAL DAY

PLEASE EAT A GOOD BREAKFAST BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT. Due to our scheduled surgeries each morning, we ask that you please be on time. Baseball caps are provided for all patients on bandage removal day. Female patients may prefer to bring a scarf to wear after the bandage is removed.

We suggest you take **one Tylenol #3** for your comfort **one hour before your scheduled appointment time**. If you are driving, please take **two extra-strength Tylenol instead of the Tylenol #3** as the latter could impair your driving ability.

You will also begin your post-operative **Prednisone** with breakfast on this day—unless contraindicated. It's important that you do not exert yourself for the first few hours following bandage removal. Exertion can cause bleeding.

We will give you some gauze to take with you following bandage removal. Occasionally, there is a small amount of bleeding from the recipient or donor areas and you can use the gauze to apply firm pressure with the pads of your fingertips to the bleeding area for 5-10 minutes. Call the office if the bleeding continues.

The night of bandage removal, **you do not need** to soak, massage, or shampoo your head. Just apply minoxidil and Surgilube, both of which are provided.

MINIMIZING SWELLING

Most patients will experience some degree of swelling after hair transplant surgery. To help prevent swelling and bruising, it will be very useful if you follow the instructions below:

You will be given two reusable ice packs on bandage-removal day. Apply ice packs to forehead, temple, and eye areas as well as the nape of your neck. **DO NOT PLACE COLD PACKS DIRECTLY ON THE GRAFTS.** We recommend using the packs 10 minutes on and 20 minutes off, as much as possible for the first few days after your surgery.

Try sleeping with your head at a 45° angle by using three or four pillows, or sleep on a reclining chair for one to five nights following your surgery. This will help to minimize the swelling. Even better, do the opposite, and try to sleep flat with **no** pillows. Any swelling that develops will be pulled by gravity away from your face.

Note: If swelling should occur, we are sorry if this inconveniences you. Unfortunately, if you call the office, there is no further treatment or medication available. Nature must take its course. The swelling will gradually subside over a three- to seven-day period.

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDY (OPTIONAL)

The following are recommended by many cosmetic surgeons to promote healing, minimize bruising and swelling. The evidence to support this is mostly anecdotal and thus we recommend it as an **optional addition** to the regular post-operative instructions.

- **Arnica Montana (30c) pellets: Immediately post-operatively:** place 5 pellets under your tongue every hour until bedtime. For the rest of the first two weeks post-operatively, place 5 pellets under your tongue three times daily.
- **Arnica Gel:** Apply gel to any bruised or swollen areas, twice daily for two weeks post-operatively. **Do not put on any grafted or sutured areas and avoid contact with eyes.**

SHAMPOOING

On the 2nd day after your surgery, and until your sutures are removed from the donor area, you should wash your hair **TWICE** daily, in the following manner:

- Fill the bathtub with warm water; lie back in the water until the water covers the donor area (sutures). Epsom salts are recommended to add to the bathwater to aid in healing
- Soak the donor area for 10 minutes, and then for another 10 minutes continue soaking, while massaging the donor area, with as much pressure as you can tolerate, using the pads of your fingertips.
- At the same time while you have been soaking and massaging for 20 minutes, apply a wet facecloth to the recipient area continuously wetting it with bathwater. This helps to dissolve the Surgilube.
- Gently shampoo your whole head with a mild shampoo that contains no medications and don't be afraid to get a good lather. Bring a cup into the bath and with clean, warm tap water, rinse off the shampoo. Continue washing your hair in this way for the first seven days.
- Gently towel-dry your hair or blow dry it on a "cool" setting. Apply **minoxidil 3%** to the grafts to potentially accelerate the healing process.
- Next, apply the water-based Surgilube to the recipient area and the donor area.
- In order to avoid disturbing your grafts, it is best to simply use your fingertips to style your hair. If you must use an instrument, a comb is generally better than a brush, unless the brush has rounded knobs on the end to minimize graft trauma.

SUTURE REMOVAL DAY

You may want to take **one or two extra-strength Tylenol** one hour before you come to the office to alleviate any slight discomfort that you may experience. After your sutures have been removed, wash your hair **daily** in the shower until all the crusts have fallen off.

EXERCISE

We recommend that you **do not exercise for one week**; however, you may engage in light walking or mild activity. If you do begin exercising after 7 days, or otherwise

engage in activities that cause you to perspire, please wash your hair as soon as possible after the activity. This is to prevent infection. Maximum weight-lifting or any kind of heavy lifting must be avoided for 14 days following surgery. You may swim in a clean lake or a clean private pool beginning the day after surgery. Wait two weeks before swimming in a public pool or in water of uncertain cleanliness.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When may I cut my hair again?

Two weeks after surgery.

When may I dye my hair?

Two weeks after surgery.

How long until I may get my hair straightened?

Three weeks after surgery.

When may I travel?

Travel within North America is allowed 24 hours after surgery. However, we encourage all patients to allow 48 hours prior to traveling internationally.

When may I drink alcohol?

Once you are off narcotic pain medications. However, if you experienced increased bleeding, please ask the surgeon when you may resume alcohol consumption.

When can I go in the sun?

A little sun is helpful in the healing process, but be cautious to avoid getting a sunburn. Avoid sun during the peak hours of 11am to 3pm.

How often can I wear my hat?

It is better to have your head open to the air rather than within a warm, moist environment. However, as long as the hat is clean, you may wear it right away (but as little as possible for the first week). After 7-10 days, you may wear your hat normally.

If I wear a hair piece, when may I wear it again?

Not for the first week after surgery and then as little as possible for the 2nd and 3rd weeks post-operatively. After the third week, you may wear it normally.

Should I use minoxidil solution and for how long?

The transplanted hair will grow without minoxidil. However, we recommend it for 3 weeks postoperatively to (theoretically) accelerate healing and minimize postoperative loss of any original hair in the area. It may also accelerate the regrowth of transplanted hairs so some patients use it until they feel stubble growing (after approximately 2½ - 3 months).