

Jeffrey J. Zuravleff, M.D.
2807 N. Parham Road, Suite 100
Richmond VA 23294

POST OPERATIVE WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Taking care of your surgical wounds is important to your recovery. Please review the following instructions. You will be asked to sign this instruction sheet to acknowledge receipt and understanding.

If you need any clarification, please ask our staff to assist you before going home. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Zuravleff or our staff (804) 934-9344.

Swelling is normal after any injury including a surgery. Applying ice to the surgical site will decrease swelling, as well as resting in a recliner during the day and sleeping with your head elevated using at least two pillows. Try to avoid foods rich in salt, as this will make you retain more fluids and may increase the amount of swelling.

We recommend applying an ice pack (frozen peas or corn work well instead of ice) to the surgical area for 20 minutes on and 20 minutes off for the first 48 hours (while awake) after surgery. Please do not apply the ice directly to the wound - instead, apply a clean towel or washcloth to the wound and place the ice over the cloth. After 48 hours, it is best not to apply cold or heat for 24 hours. If cold improves comfort and relieves pain, it does not cause harm to continue for an additional day. By the fourth day, you should use warm compresses, alternating on and off your wound 20 minutes at a time.

Bruising is not unusual after your surgery. At first, the skin will look bright red or bluish-purple and will fade to a light brown or yellow after the first week. Often the bruising appears some distance away from the surgical site. This is caused by the gravitational spread of blood and not direct injury to the distant tissues.

If you had a brow or forehead lift, you may notice more bruising in your lower eyelids and upper cheek. Upper eyelid surgery may cause bruising to spread into the lower eyelids. Surgery in the mid-face may be noticeable to the jaw-line and neck. Injections of fillers may cause localized bruising.

You may decrease the degree and amount of bruising by avoiding use of aspirin type products 14 days prior to the surgery and take homeopathic products containing Arnica Montana. We recommend starting take tablets 1 day prior to surgery and continue up to 5 days after your procedure. Please avoid topical forms of Arnica - gel or cream as these are not safe around eyes.

Drainage/Bleeding

Light bleeding from the surgical wound may occur immediately following surgery.

Gentle pressure with a cool compress should be applied. Occasional light oozing of blood around sutures might occur during the first 24 hours after surgery. If bleeding persists beyond 24 hours or is heavy and uncontrolled, contact our office immediately.

A large collection of blood (a *hematoma*) under the surgical area needs to be examined immediately by a doctor. Typically, a hematoma will cause the tissue to feel and look tight and will often be painful. A hematoma is not to be confused with a bruise. A bruise has usually typical “black and blue mark” and is not tight to the touch.

Discharge

If your surgery involved the eye, you may notice a light, blood-tinged discharge from the eye itself in the first few days following surgery. You may also see mucus that tends to be stringy and off-white in color.

Pus discharge (thick and creamy substance, yellow in color), redness, fever, and increased pain are usually signs of infection and should be immediately brought to your doctor’s attention.

Pain is a normal response after your surgery. As the anesthetic wears off, you may notice increased pain several hours after leaving the operating room. Bending over, straining or strenuous activity may worsen the pain.

We recommend Tylenol Extra Strength for pain. If you are expected to have more severe pain, your doctor will prescribe a narcotic pain-reliever.

You should AVOID ASPRIN, IBUPROFEN, ALEVE and any other over the counter pain relievers FOR THE FIRST 48 HOURS as they may make you more prone to bleeding. Tylenol does not affect your bleeding.

Medications are prescribed the day of your surgery or called in to your pharmacy one day before your procedure. You may be prescribed an ophthalmic antibiotic ointment or drops depending on the type of surgery. Please make sure the ointment you have received at your pharmacy is labeled ophthalmic.

Ointment should be applied with a clean finger or Q-tip to the surgical site and sutures 3 times a day. If the ointment gets into your eye it will cause no harm but will temporarily blur your vision.

Eye drops should be applied to the eye by gently pulling the lower lid away from the eye and placing the drop into the eye pocket. If your eyelids have been partially closed by the surgery you can apply the drop into the opening between the upper and lower eyelids. Close your eye without squeezing for several minutes after applying the drop. Please do not let the tip of the bottle touch your eye as it may be contaminated.

If you are given oral medications, please take as directed by your physician. Please be aware that prescribed narcotic pain relievers (containing Hydrocodone and acetaminophen – Vicodin, Lortab, Norco) may cause stomach discomfort, nausea and vomiting, if taken on an empty stomach. Also use caution and your own judgment when driving as you may feel lightheaded, dizzy and sedated. Always take narcotics with food, avoid alcoholic beverages and drink plenty fluids to prevent constipation. Please report any severe adverse reactions to your physician immediately.

Take all your regular medication as you did before the surgery, unless instructed otherwise.

Cleaning of your wound should be done carefully and gently with a warm, clean washcloth. Gentle blotting, not rubbing, will prevent the sutures from being disturbed. Mattering of the eyelids is common after eyelid or eye surgery and can be cleaned with damp cotton balls or warm washcloth. Do not disturb scabs that may form on the skin. If the wound is in the scalp hair, you may carefully untangle the hair from the scab if it is bothersome. If you do not have a special dressing over your wound, you can shower the day after surgery. Do not aim the shower directly on the wound. Avoid dusty, dirty environments.

After tear duct surgery, nasal stuffiness is common. Tubes are often placed in your nose and mucous/blood may accumulate around them. Saline nasal spray can be purchased without a prescription and helps to loosen the mucous. Nasal decongestants such as Afrin nasal spray may help but should not be used for more than one week. Once you take shower the morning following surgery, the warm mist will also help loosen the mucous.

If you need to clear your nose, lightly sniffle.

Do not blow your nose forcefully.

If your surgery required general anesthesia, you should avoid heavy meals for the first 24 hours. Clear liquids such as broth, apple juice, and ginger-ale should be taken for your first two meals. You may also feel more tired or a bit “run down” for several days after general anesthesia.

Avoid following in the first 24 hours after surgery:

Do not drive the day of surgery and use caution while taking narcotic pain medications.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages.

Do not exercise or do any strenuous activities.

Do not make any important decisions or sign important papers.

Follow-up Appointments

The timing of your follow-up appointment depends on the types of sutures or dressing applied during the surgery. Our office will schedule your follow up appointment immediately after an in-office procedure or call you at home to schedule your follow-up appointment. Generally, you will follow up 6 to 12 days after surgery for suture removal depending on type of surgery.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your post operative care, please contact our office (804)934-9344.

Thank you,

Jeffrey J. Zuravleff, M.D. FACS

Patient signature

Date