

After Surgery

If at all possible, please have a family member or friend stay with you for the first 24 hours after surgery. You will be given Dr. Dhir's after-hours phone number in case any problems arise.

Pain Management

Postoperative pain is typically mild to moderate for one or two days after surgery. Many patients are able to adequately control their pain with Tylenol. We may prescribe a few oral narcotic pills to ensure that you are comfortable and able to rest in the immediate postoperative period. Please avoid anti-inflammatories (e.g. Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Naprosyn, and aspirin-containing products) for 48 hours because they may cause bleeding.

Bruising and Swelling:

Surgical procedures, no matter how delicately performed, induce varying amounts of bruising and swelling. Bruising and swelling are often more pronounced with mid-facial surgeries near the eyes, nose, or lips, and in patients with a history of blood thinner use. To reduce swelling and also pain, it is helpful to apply an ice pack (or bag of frozen peas or corn) for 15" every 2 hours while awake. Swelling typically peaks at 48 hours after surgery and may take several days or even a week or two to subside. There is some weak scientific evidence that oral Arnica and/or Bromelain may minimize bruising in the peri-operative period. If you choose to use them, please follow the instructions on the bottle.

Blood Thinners: Medications, Herbal Supplements and Alcohol

If asked to stop blood thinners, herbal supplements, or alcohol, you may safely resume them 48 hours after surgery.

Tobacco:

Please try to avoid all tobacco use for at least 7 to 14 days after surgery. Tobacco contains numerous chemicals and toxins which negatively impact wound healing. Also, nicotine causes spasm and constriction of the blood vessels in the heart and skin. This significantly reduces oxygen and nutrient delivery to the wound just when its metabolic needs are the greatest. In our experience, peri-operative tobacco use is the most common reason for poor wound healing, infection, and suboptimal scarring.

Bathing and Shaving

Generally, you may shower 1 to 2 days after surgery. Please do not shave directly over any stitches until they have dissolved or we have removed them.

Wound Care

We will give you specific printed instructions after completing your surgery. In general, we ask that you leave the bandage in place for 24 to 48 hours. After removing the bandage, please soak the area twice each day with a mixture of 1 tablespoon of plain white vinegar in one pint of warm tap water. Soak for 15 minutes and then apply Aquaphor (or Vaseline) and a non-stick bandage (e.g. Telfa). The goal is to avoid scabbing or drying of the surgical site. We would prefer that you avoid Neosporin, Bacitracin, and Polysporin since these products often cause a local allergic reaction around the surgical site. Wound care is generally continued for 10 to 14 days, or until there is no discharge or crusting.

Physical Restrictions

Please avoid any bending or lifting of objects heavier than 20 pounds for 7 days, to avoid placing the wound under excessive tension. It takes about 2 to 3 weeks for the wound to develop significant structural integrity, so please plan your schedule to avoid strenuous activities such as exercise, tennis, golf, cycling, or heavy lifting for this period of time.

Nutritional Recommendations

To improve wound healing, please increase your intake of protein and carbohydrates, as well as fruits and vegetables. The following supplements have also been shown to support wound healing at RDA levels for a few days or weeks after surgery. Zinc has the added benefit of antioxidant properties which may help prevent future ultraviolet radiation damage.

Vitamin C	Zinc	Iron	Vitamin B6 & B12
Arginine	Glutamine	Arnica	Vitamin A

Studies suggest that vegan and vegetarian diets may result in reduced collagen synthesis and poorer wound healing following surgery – possibly due to a reduction in essential nutrients such as iron, zinc, vitamins B6 & B12, and amino acids such as arginine and glutamine. So, supplementation may be even more important if you follow a vegan or vegetarian diet.

Oral Nicotinamide (Vitamin B3) 500 mg twice daily may reduce the risk of future basal and squamous cell carcinomas by 23%, and the number of actinic keratoses (pre-cancers) by 15%. Please make sure NOT to purchase the Niacin form of Vitamin B3 because it can cause significant bothersome flushing. Of course, it's still important to protect your skin from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

Return Visits

We often use outside sutures that dissolve on their own in about 5 to 10 days. In other cases, you may need to return in 7 to 14 days for suture removal with one

of Dr. Dhir's assistants. Some patients will need to return for another 1 to 2 visits for examination of the surgical site. After Dr. Dhir has completed his care, you should return to your referring physician as scheduled and at least annually for skin cancer screenings.

Please be Patient as your Body Heals

Bruising and swelling generally fade during the first few weeks after surgery. However, full healing takes many months. It's normal for wounds to tighten for 4-8 weeks after surgery and then relax over the next 4 to 8 months. Nerves regenerate slowly, so please don't be surprised if you have some numbness at the surgical site for several months. To achieve the best cosmetic result, it is helpful to apply a moisturizer daily for a few months following surgery. Any moisturizing cream is acceptable, but we are particularly fond of Cera Ve cream. It takes a full year to achieve your final cosmetic result, and patients are generally pleased with the continued improvement over time.