



## Facelift Surgery Post-Op Instructions

Video Instructions are available at

<http://www.lovethatface.com/forms/surgery-instructions-and-consents>

Facelift surgery is one of the most dramatic cosmetic surgery procedures to look more youthful. No other procedure can improve the face, neck and jowls more than the facelift. In order to take advantage of all the positive changes associated with the facelift the patient must pay close attention to the recovery process. Remember, the outcome of the procedure has a lot to do with the patient and how they follow instructions. A good result is not just from the surgeon! Dr. Niamtu has performed a thousand facelifts and the patients that adhere to the following instructions have the best results.

Caregiver: You will need a mature responsible adult that is mentally and physically able to assist you when leaving the surgery center and getting into your house and bed as well as assist with you medications and general recovery needs. If you do not have a responsible caregiver our office can provide contacts for a professional. Since you will be taking numerous medications, you and your caregiver should view our post-surgery recovery and medication videos before surgery and refer to them after surgery if you have questions. We frequently get calls about medications and sometimes nausea, so refer to these videos at: [www.lovethatface.com/forms/surgery-instructions-and-consents](http://www.lovethatface.com/forms/surgery-instructions-and-consents) before calling.

Dressings: Dr. Niamtu does not use standard bulky dressings with facelifts. We have found that most patients actually do better and are more comfortable with a small bandage or without any facial dressing at all.

Heat and Cold: Although heat or cold is often used after many types of surgery, DO NOT put heat or ice on your face or neck after facelift surgery. The skin flaps are very thin and heat or ice can stop the blood supply and cause tissue loss and scars. We have unfortunately seen numerous patients that burned large holes in their face with heat pads, microwave heat pads, ice packs, chemical ice packs and curling irons. Remember, you are numb and can't tell when it is too hot or too cold. If you have had eyelid surgery or laser, it is ok to put cold wash cloths on the surgery sites, but not direct ice!

Hygiene: It is important to keep the surgical sites and incisions clean. You may shower after 24 hours and gently wash your hair with a mild shampoo such as baby shampoo. If you notice hair loss in the shower, do not be alarmed, these are strands of hair that were cut during the

surgery and will grow back. Brushing and blow-drying the hair must be performed with caution. Because the skin is temporarily numb patients can sustain severe facial burns that can leave permanent scars if the blow dryer is used on the "hot" setting. Some incisions are closed with staples and care must be used not to snag them when using a comb. A soft hairbrush is a better choice. Hair coloring and permanents should be avoided until 4 weeks after surgery. Please do not put anything on your incision scars other than peroxide, antibiotic ointment or Vaseline. Many patients want to use some "special healing or scar remedy" and we have plenty of stories about complications from these types of products. Please ask Dr. Niamtu before applying anything else on your scars or incisions for the first 3 weeks. Remember, your incisions may look bad at first but Dr. Niamtu takes pride in the lack of scarring; your incisions will look much better soon.

Makeup can usually be applied after the first week but not on skin that is raw from laser treatment.

Drains: Dr. Niamtu does not routinely use drains on his facelift patients. In selected cases a drainage tube may be used and you will receive instructions at that time.

Activity: For the first 48 hours, rest is absolutely necessary. Keep the head elevated as much as possible and limit talking and chewy food. Sleep in a recliner if possible or with your head on several pillows. Do not sleep on the side of your face but rather sleep with the back of your head on the pillow for the first 2 weeks. Also popular is the common pillow called a "husband." This is the large pillow that has extensions that go under the arms and supports the patient. These are the same type of pillows people use to watch TV in bed, etc.

It is imperative to avoid any activity that increases blood pressure. This includes bending, lifting, straining, coughing, straining during bowel movement (Colace or other stool softeners will help), sneezing and sex. The key word is to RELAX; your results will be better. Patients should not drive until they can turn their head without pain or restriction and are not taking pain medicine.

How I look and feel: Patients that undergo facelift surgery (especially when performed with multiple procedures) are likely to experience significant swelling and bruising that begins overnight and increases over the first several days. The face may appear distorted and sides of the neck may also swell. Bruising can last several weeks and will change from blue to yellow and due to the effects of gravity may extend down the upper chest.

Your neck may feel very tight and sore the first several days and a sore throat is also common and related to the anesthesia surgery. Do not try to clear your throat as this can increase blood pressure and cause harmful bleeding. Avoid any extreme movements of the face, neck and mouth. Numbness is very common with facelift procedures and will resolve naturally over the upcoming weeks.

Postoperative Office Visits: You will need to be seen the morning after surgery and the dressing and vents will be removed and your incisions cleaned. Most patients are then seen at 1 week, 2 weeks (staple removal), 6 weeks and 12 weeks. Out of town patients will have different arrangements. Basic healing occurs by the end of the second week and this is when most patients can return to work. By 6 weeks there is significant improvement and by 12 weeks most healing is completed and post-operative pictures will be taken. Small healing changes may occur for the first 6 months.

Exercise: During the first postoperative week, activity should be kept to a minimum with no strenuous activity. Activity is slowly increased and walking is a superb way of getting exercise

and not jeopardizing the operation. You should absolutely not perform exercises that require severe turning of the head such as golf, rowing, aerobics, yoga, bowling, etc. for at least 4 weeks after your surgery. These extreme stretching movements can tear the sutures that are supporting the lift. After 4-6 weeks, the areas are fully healed and normal activity can be resumed. Patients that work out may begin at "50%" after the second week and gradually increase their workouts to normal by one month. Remember to avoid maneuvers that turn or stretch the neck.

If you have problems or questions, please call the office at 934-3223 (FACE). You will be given Dr. Niamtu's cell phone before your surgery.