



Kimberly Cockerham, MD, FACS
Oculofacial Plastic Surgery
Eyelid & Orbital Oncology
Thyroid Eye Disease
Neuro-Ophthalmology

Post Surgical Instructions

Two weeks prior, STOP taking all medications listed on the Avoid List:

- Aspirin and aspirin-containing products
- All anti-inflammatory medications such as Motrin® – only Tylenol® is does not thin your blood and is ok to take
- All supplements including flax seed, fish oil and vitamins

Two days prior, START taking:

- Arnica Forte® for swelling (one capsule twice daily for 5-day supply). This is optional supplement to minimize bruising and swelling

Day of Surgery:

- Arrive without make-up and lash extensions
- Wear comfortable clothing
- No breakfast if you are receiving sedation

What to Expect During Surgery:

- Eye drops that numb the surface of your eyes will be placed in each eye. A blue plastic protector may then be placed in your eyes. The area of interest will be injected with a combination of lidocaine and Marcaine®. Your face will then be cleansed with Betadine® and sterile towels will be used to drape your head and chest.

Post-Surgery

- You may feel stinging, which can be relieved with cool compresses and Tylenol. Apply cool compresses (zip lock bag with frozen peas, corn or blueberries works well and is inexpensive) directly to your eyelids. If too cold place gauze on eyelids and cool compresses on top or add water to the zip lock bag. Use 20-30 minutes of each waking hour for the first two days.
- It is very important to avoid dusty or dirty environments.
- If eye drops have been prescribed, place in the operated eye twice daily.
- If antibiotic ointment is prescribed – apply to incision twice daily.
- Your sutures will be removed 5–14 days after surgery depending on your procedure and how you heal.
- Continue your antibiotic ointment for one night after the sutures are removed.



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Contact the office if your incision opens or looks red, bumpy or starts to turn brown, excessively bleeding, feeling feverish, purulent drainage, significant vision loss.

Office: 619-810-1275 Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 5 pm
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MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED POST-OP QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

What to expect immediately after surgery:

Oozing or bloody drainage at your incision site

- This is normal. As long as it is not briskly bleeding and your stitches are not broken just relax and apply cold compresses and limit your activity.

Itching

- Take Benadryl 50 mg orally (caution as this can make you drowsy), do NOT rub your eyes this can break your sutures. Consider cool compresses with vinegar water (one tablespoon of white vinegar mixed with one cup of distilled water, place bowl in refrigerator and add gauze) wring out gauze and apply to eyelids/brows/area of incisions.

Bruising and swelling

- Can initially get worse for the first 2-3 days, then should start to improve.
- Bruising takes usually 1-2 weeks to improve
- Swelling takes usually 3-4 weeks to improve

Dry/irritated eyes/tearing/blurry vision

- You may have difficulty closing eyes for the first few days, this is normal. You can use preservative free artificial tears 4-6x/day. Refresh omega is very soothing and is anti-inflammatory.

Pain control

- Take Tylenol (max strength, 500mg) one pill each 4-6 hours.
- Avoid ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, Motrin or other NSAIDS for pain relief as this can worsen bleeding/bruising.
- Cool compresses– every 20 minutes for the first 2-3 days. This will help the most with bruising and swelling. Don't directly place bag of pure ice as that can be heavy and break open your incisions. Place frozen corn/peas/blueberries in zip lock bag filled up one third of the bag and add enough water to cover the frozen veggies.



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Resuming blood thinners: (for cardiac/stroke/blood clot reasons)

- Unless specifically directed by your PCP or cardiologist to restart earlier, you can resume aspirin and other blood thinners on post-op day 2.
- You can resume NSAIDS (Naproxen, Advil, Ibuprofen), omega-3/fish oil and other supplements in 2 weeks.

Sleeping:

- Keep head of bed elevated for 2 weeks to help with swelling. This can be achieved by sleeping on a recliner or with 2 pillows under the head.
- Avoid rolling onto your face or sleeping on your side.
- No sleeping with pets in the bed for 2 weeks.

Showering:

- Avoid showering for the first 24 hours. Then can resume including washing hair and face, but keep eyelid area dry for 1 week.
- Do not let shower water directly hit eyelids for 2 weeks as the pressure can break open your incisions and hot water can prompt bleeding.

Driving

- No driving for 24 hours after receiving IV anesthesia. This is the law.
- Avoid driving if uncomfortable or vision blurry.

Activity restrictions

- No heavy lifting (>5lbs), bending over or straining.
- No dirty/dusty environments for at least 2 weeks.
- No jogging/vigorous exercise for 2-3 weeks. It's okay to lightly walk after day 3.
- No swimming/hot tubbing for 3 weeks
- No contact or competitive sports for 6 weeks

Make-up and Sun Protection

- No eye make-up for 2 weeks.
- Wear sunglasses for UV protection immediately post-op, start sunblock lotion or powder one day after sutures are removed.
- No hair dye/coloring for 4 weeks

Contact lenses

- Avoid contact lenses for 2-3 weeks or until eyelids are no longer swollen.



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Returning to work

- Will vary depending on the job type. Generally, you will be able to return to work approximately 7-10 days following surgery. You may discuss this issue with your physician at the time of your post-op visit.

Smoking/alcohol

- You should not smoke for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery. Smoking and chewing tobacco inhibit your circulation and can significantly compromise your surgical outcome
- Limit or eliminate alcohol consumption the week prior and week after surgery to help the healing process.

Sutures

- Usually removed at the post-op week 1 visit. For more complex surgeries or slow healing sutures may be removed at week 2 or later.
- If you still have significant swelling at 1 week, may leave in for 2 weeks.
- Continue antibiotic ointment for another 3 days after suture removal.

Care beyond post-op visits:

- Minor fluctuations in swelling can occur over the next 2-3 months. This is to be expected. Swelling is often present when you first wake up and then improves over the course of the day.
- Avoid direct sunlight exposure on the incisions for at least 6 months. Make sure to wear sunscreen on your face/eyelids every day (even indoors if sitting by a window), at least spf 30 or more. Always wear UVA/ UVB sunglasses outdoors.
- Consider using powder sunblock every two hours when out especially if the incision is beginning to look pink or brown.
- Healing is a gradual process and your scars may remain slightly pink and lumpy/bumpy for 6 months or more.
- Beginning 4 weeks after the surgery, application and gentle massage with Mederma or other silicone scar products may promote softer, less conspicuous scarring. These are available at your local pharmacy or on-Line.

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