

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM PLASTIC SURGERY

Plastic surgery, whether for cosmetic or reconstructive reasons is “real” surgery. You will require time to heal and will probably need to take some time off from work for most procedures. You will have incisions, dressings, and possibly even drains after your surgery. There will also be restrictions on movement, lifting and activity—the amount of your restriction will depend on which procedure(s) you have done. You will be given procedure specific instructions at your pre-operative appointment on how to care for yourself after surgery.

Please make plans in advance for at home assistance for you and for child care. Please make any needed arrangements for someone to drive you and care for your children when you come to your post-operative appointments. Someone must also drive you home from surgery.

**DO NOT SMOKE:** Smoking reduces circulation, which delays and/or impedes healing. If you must smoke, please stop at least one month before and continue not to smoke for two full weeks after surgery. Likewise, alcohol can cause problems with healing and can cause bleeding during and after surgery. Please limit alcohol use immediately before surgery, and do not combine with narcotic use post-operatively. Please call us if you have any specific questions.

Read the **MEDICATIONS TO AVOID** list and stop all unapproved medications two full weeks before your surgery and continue not taking them until a full two weeks after surgery. Be sure to have your prescriptions filled and purchase all the necessary supplies for your procedure before surgery, and have them waiting for you at home.

However well intentioned, friends and family members who have no medical background and/or no experience with surgery often make uneducated judgments or comments about your progress, which may upset you. These well meaning people usually do not understand what constitutes a normal post-operative course of healing. Please discuss any doubts or fears with one of us before becoming upset. We will tell you what to expect and what is normal.

Healing is an individualized process. Your healing will progress at your body’s own pace. Never compare how you are healing with one of your friends and decide that you are not normal. In medicine, there are very few norms. After surgery, patients often become frustrated because no one can tell them the answer to questions like, “When will I be healed?” or “When will this swelling go away?” Your physician cannot make you heal any faster, but he or she will tell you things to help you facilitate (but not accelerate) the process.

Following instructions and taking your medications correctly is a major factor in determining a good course of healing. Your physician will give you both written and verbal instructions. Please **READ ALL OF YOUR INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY** as many times as is necessary for you to understand them completely. They are designed to allow you the best opportunity for healing without delay or complications. Most often, complications after surgery are the result of the patient’s failure to follow directions combined with variances in the healing process. It is also a good idea to have your caregiver or helper read your instructions so he/she may better assist you.

Please remember that we are here to answer any questions and concerns both prior to your surgery as well as during your post-operative course. We want to assist in making your experience as smooth and pleasant as possible.

Healing is a very individualized process. How fast or how well you heal is entirely dependent on your body. If you have had surgery previously, you will have a good baseline as to how your body may react. Your body will heal at its own pace and in its own time. There is nothing you can do to speed the process. Becoming too

anxious or stressed out may inhibit or delay your healing. You must relax, eat right, and follow your instructions to the letter.

Often after a cosmetic procedure, expectations are not in line with reality. Your logical mind knows that your surgery is real, but your subconscious mind may expect to look great after a few days. After all, you chose to have this surgery and you are not seriously ill. You must give yourself time to heal.

Also, many people expect perfection from cosmetic surgery. The human body is naturally asymmetrical (uneven from side to side) and medicine is not a perfect science. Your surgeon has performed the absolute best procedure he/she could while working under limitations. There is a limit to what can be done surgically and if you expect absolute perfection, you may need to slightly adjust your expectations to meet reality. Also, know that if you are dissatisfied, your surgeon will work with you for the best possible outcome. This may or may not involve some type of revisional procedure at an additional cost.

During healing, your body requires extra protein to accomplish its task. You probably won't have much of an appetite, especially for the first three or four days after surgery, but it is necessary that you eat. Eggs, yogurt, lean meats, and milk are good sources of protein. You can even purchase protein powder at the health food store and mix it into a fruit smoothie.

It is normal to experience feelings of depression or a let-down after cosmetic surgery. Patients often ask themselves questions like: "What have I done to myself?" or "Why did I have this surgery?" Keep in mind that most people go through a brief period of post-operative depression. These feelings will disappear as you heal and begin to see the results of your surgical procedure materialize. Remember that your physician does not wave a magic wand to improve your appearance. You need to give your body time to heal. Please, BE PATIENT.

Don't be surprised if even close friends or family members do not notice a change in your appearance. People will have a sense that something is different, but they will not be able to pinpoint what it is. Most individuals see you as a whole person and do not really notice individual features that to you may stick out like a sore thumb. Don't be discouraged. This phenomenon will allow you to be as candid or as discreet as you prefer to be about discussing your surgery.

Above all, do not listen to others who make uninformed comments about how you are healing. Unless this person has a medical background or experience, he/she may be unaware that their lack of understanding is upsetting to you. We will always keep you informed as to how your healing is progressing and let you know whether or not you are on the right track. Please trust in our knowledge and experience to guide you through to your optimal result.