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CHEEK LIFT AFTER-CARE INSTRUCTIONS

INTRO:

Congratulations on your decision to get a cheek lift. These after-care instructions, along with our office staff, will help guide you through your recovery process. It is crucial that you and your caretakers **read through these instructions both BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY**.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

The superficial cheeklift is a technique invented by Dr. Moelleken. It was published in the journal **Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery** in November 1999. Dr. Moelleken gave an initial international introduction to this new procedure to over 2000 plastic surgeons at the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) meeting, and the California Society for Plastic Surgeons and the University of California, Los Angeles.

The superficial cheeklift involves raising up the midface underneath the eye. No implants or plastics are used. The unique feature of this operation is that the cheekpad is tied with invisible stitches to very tough tissue beside the eye and doesn't rely at all on the very weak lower eyelid. The recovery time is about the same as for the lower eyes. Most patients are back to light activity a week after surgery. The superficial cheeklift uses an incision hidden just below the lower eyelashes. All the remaining stitches are hidden under the skin.

The superficial cheeklift elevates the cheekpads and rejuvenates the eyes creating a natural rejuvenated look. The superficial cheeklift is especially for people who have a baggy, droopy appearance of the lower eyes and cheeks. Usually, this problem starts in the late 30's and 40's.

HAVE CARETAKER WITH YOU:

- Following your procedure, have an adult caretaker stay with you for the first 24-48 hours. You will be drowsy from the anesthesia and will not be able to drive for at least 24 hours.

GROOMING:

- Do NOT get the tapes on your eyes wet for three days.
- After three days, you may shower and get the tapes wet, pat dry, but do not pull them off.
- A nurse will remove these tapes, and new tapes will be applied in 4-5 days.
- Do not allow water from the showerhead to hit your face directly.
- Follow instructions for eye drops and eye ointment as directed. Be aware that ointments will blur your vision and be cautious.

PAIN AND PAIN MEDICATION:

- Take pain medication with food.
- Vicodin (Hydrocodone + Acetaminophen) or Percocet (Oxycodone + Acetaminophen) should be taken as directed:
 - Mild to moderate pain: 1 tablet every 4-6 hours
 - Severe pain: 2 tablets every 4-6 hours

- If your pain is mild, you may opt to take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 1000 mg every 8 hours (which is 2 tablets of the Extra Strength Tylenol purchased over-the-counter).
- Take a stool softener, such as Colace, while taking pain medication to help prevent constipation.
- DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATION.
- DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOL WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.
- Take pain medication only if needed. The quicker you can wean off the pain medications, the better you will feel and heal.

SUPPLEMENTS:

- Do not take aspirin (or products containing aspirin) for 10 days after the procedure.
- Do not take herbal supplements (vitamin E, fish oil, hormone replacements) for 10 days after the procedure.
- An adequate diet with vitamin supplements, especially vitamin C, is recommended.
- Phentermine or appetite suppressants should not be taken until 6 weeks after the procedure since they increase heart rate and blood pressure which could interfere with your recovery.

DO NOT SMOKE:

- This is very important because smoking (tobacco, marijuana, or vapes) can result in a lack of blood supply to the tissues and fat, causing the tissue to die or delayed healing.
- Smoking can resume 4 weeks after surgery if there are no other complications present.

POSITIONING/SLEEPING:

- Avoid lying on your cheeks for two weeks.
- Sleep on your back with your head elevated at a 45° angle for one week after your procedure. Keep a pillow under each arm, and a pillow under your knees.
- It is common for your hands and feet to swell the first couple weeks after procedure. To reduce swelling, it helps to elevate your arms and legs with pillows when you are lying or sitting.
- It is important to apply ice compresses to eyes with an ice mask, or frozen peas in a small Ziplock bag for the first 24-48 hours. Avoid putting cold plastic directly on your eyes by using a soft cloth as a barrier. This will minimize swelling and bruising.
- **As with any facial surgery, AVOID BENDING FORWARD, as this creates strain on all incisions that are healing.**

DIET:

- A light diet is best after surgery. Start with liquids and progress to soft foods like soups and Jell-O.
- Stay on a soft diet with high protein for 2-3 days following the procedure. Avoid spicy foods, sugar-free sweeteners, and carbonated drinks to reduce gas, bloating and nausea.

ACTIVITIES:

- The first week you should plan on remaining relatively at rest at home. Patients who are too vigorous frequently develop complications.
- After the first week of surgery, you may be given directions for eye exercises as follows:
 - Raising the lower lid- with one or two fingers, gently raise the lower eyelid and hold for 15 seconds. This can be done 4-5 times daily
 - Squinting- squint closing the eyes tightly and hold for 15 seconds. This will strengthen the eye muscle, and also feel good.
- The second and third week you may gradually resume activity (easy walk, a casual dinner, go out to a movie).

- Refrain from any activity that would raise your blood pressure and compromise the healing incisions and newly developing blood supply for the first couple of weeks.
- After four weeks gradual resumption of light athletic activities is allowed, but no weight training.
- At six weeks you may resume all previous activities with clearance from Dr. Moelleken. Avoid sun exposure to incision site for six months following surgery, as this may result in a hyperpigmented scar.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Post-operatively the patient is encouraged to ambulate soon after surgery with frequent periods of rest.
- Social and work activities should be quite limited for two to three weeks after surgery. If your job requires lifting, pushing, etc., a longer recuperation period may be necessary.
- Driving should be avoided for one week after surgery.
- Swelling usually occurs but begins to subside by the third or fourth day. Some degree of swelling may persist for weeks or even months.
- During this early healing phase, there is swelling, and the patient must rest and avoid all strenuous activities.
- Steri-strips covering all incisions are removed and replaced by the nurse 5-6 days after surgery.

FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:

- Every patient heals at different rates, but typically you will be seen one week after your procedure and again at 6 weeks.
- The purpose of these appointments is to check your healing progress.
- Please call to schedule your appointments. The Beverly Hills office phone number is (310) 273-1001 and the Santa Barbara office phone number is (805) 898-9299.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS:

- If you have questions or concerns regarding your procedure, please email Kristina at kristina@drbrent.com or email Dr. Brent Moelleken at drbrent@drbrent.com.
- Please call the office at (310) 273-1001 if you have increased pain at surgical incision sites, redness, sudden swelling, warmth, pus, drainage, or a fever greater than 101.5°F.
- Please visit an emergency room or call 911 if you have shortness of breath or leg swelling with pain to rule out a pulmonary embolism or blood clot which could be deadly if left untreated.

HELPFUL ITEMS TO PURCHASE BEFORE SURGERY:

- ___ Pain medications (prescription, if needed and over-the counter)
- ___ Stool Softener (i.e., Colace) to aid with any constipation from pain medication
- ___ Pillow wedge or extra pillows (to keep head at a 45° angle)
- ___ Thermometer (monitor your temperature after surgery and make sure it stays below 101.5°F)
- ___ Eye mask ice pack or frozen peas

ADDITIONAL POST-OP NOTES:
