



Enclosed is your **postoperative** information for your upcoming surgery:

*Please take the time to review these instructions carefully so you are prepared for your surgery. We have included a prescription for pain medication for you to fill prior to your surgery. The pharmacy will NOT fill this medication without this written prescription so we recommend you fill it as soon as you receive it and keep the medication in a secure place until your surgery date. This is a controlled substance intended to relieve postoperative pain. Do NOT share this medication with anyone, drive while taking this medication or consume any alcoholic beverages while taking this medication.

Below is a list of over the counter medications that you should also purchase prior to your surgery date to use during your recovery:

- **Arnica tablets/Arnica ointment**-Begin taking this medication 3-5 days prior to your surgery, until the week after your surgery and/or apply the ointment to your nose and underneath your eyes daily. This is a homeopathic medication that can help minimize bruising (available at stores like Whole Foods, Sprouts, Pharmaca etc.).
- **Nasal Saline Spray** – use liberally, use about 2 sprays in each nostril about every 2 hours while awake - this will help keep the inside of your nose moist which helps minimize congestion and promote healing.
- **Original Afrin Nasal Spray** – use 2 sprays in each nostril if you have continuous bleeding/oozing from your nose - this will help stop the bleeding. Only use as needed and up to 2 times a day maximum.

*To best deliver the nasal spray medications, lie on your back with your chin tilted up so gravity can help the medication drip to the back of your nose. Do not sniff in or blow out hard for 3 weeks after surgery as this may cause bleeding.

- Stool softener



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Facial Feminization Surgery

Facial feminization surgery is a series of procedures tailored for each individual transgender woman to feminize facial features. It is performed as either a single procedure or as multiple staged procedures. Surgical manipulation of the bone and soft tissues of the face create a feminine appearance. There are many techniques used to perform facial feminization surgery, and many factors should be taken into consideration when choosing which options are best-suited for each individual. Drs. Knott and Seth help guide you through this process during your appointments prior to surgery.

Surgery may include brow lift, lowering of the hairline, reduction of the brow bone, rhinoplasty, jaw and chin reduction, fat injection to the face, face and neck lift, shortening of the upper lip, and altering of the upper and lower eyelids.

Postoperative Patient Care Information

Immediately following facial feminization surgery, you may experience temporary soreness/pain, swelling, bruising, and changes in sensation/numbness in your face. Gauze or bandages may be applied to your incisions. An elastic bandage or support garment may be used to minimize swelling for extensive facial work. A small, thin tube may be temporarily placed under the skin to drain any excess blood or fluid in instances where extensive skin work is performed. Swelling will persist for several months after surgery. The anticipated recovery is dependent on the specific operations performed for an individual patient.

Please closely review the detailed post-operative instructions below including: How to care for your surgical site(s) following surgery, medications to apply or take orally to aid healing and reduce the risk of

infection, specific concerns to look for at the surgical site or in your general health, and when to follow up with your plastic surgeon. It is very important that you read this material prior to your surgery so you have the opportunity to ask questions as needed and are best prepared.

Prior to Your Surgery:

- **Instructions:** Please read these instructions and have your caregiver(s) also be familiar with the instructions. Please call the office should you have any questions prior to the surgery about the instructions.
- **Medications:** Have all medications that were recommended or prescribed ready at home.
- **Hormone therapy:** Stop all hormone therapy 2 weeks prior to surgery. This helps prevent blood clots that may form during surgery.
- **Food:** Have food and beverage at home and read so that you can keep a healthy diet after surgery.
- **Caregiver:** You will need someone to help take care of you after surgery. This could be a reliable friend, family member, or nurse. Please notify our office or your referring physician's office if you do not have someone to help.
- **Anesthesia consultation:** You will have a "Prepare" appointment either in person or over the phone where a member of the anesthesia team will help you prepare for surgery.
- **The night before:** Nothing to eat or drink starting at midnight the night before surgery. Take any medications the morning of surgery that you were specifically instructed to take by the anesthesia team.
- **Transportation:** Make sure you have a ride to the surgical center and a ride home for after the surgery or next day, as specified by your surgeon.
- **Avoid Aspirin or Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) Medications:** Aspirin or NSAIDs such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve

should be stopped 10 days prior to surgery. Aspirin and NSAIDs may cause bleeding and should be avoided until 10 days after your surgery. **It is also important that you let your surgeon know if you are taking any other blood thinning medications on a daily basis such as Coumadin, Pradaxa, Eliquis, Asprin or Celebrex.**

What to Expect After Your Surgery:

- **Pain:** While you should expect to have some pain after surgery, your doctor will make every effort to safely lessen your pain. We suggest that you take the pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon regularly, especially for the first few days after surgery. Please see additional instructions below for further information on how to optimize your pain control.
- **Fatigue:** You may feel very tired for the first week or two after your surgery. You will probably need to take several weeks off of work/school/activities to recover. Every patient is unique and some may return to their routine sooner than others.
- **Sore Throat:** A sore throat is a normal circumstance after surgery due to the equipment used while you are under anesthesia. It may also cause some bruising and/or numbness on your tongue or lips that will resolve. Every effort will be made to minimize this. Throat lozenges or throat spray may help to relieve the symptoms as you recover.
- **Swelling:** You will experience swelling in the area/s that have been operated on especially around the nose, eyes, cheeks, lip, ears and/or chin, depending on the individualized surgical procedures you and your doctor have chosen. The swelling may increase over the first couple of days after surgery. It is imperative that you use ice cold compresses to minimize swelling and bruising. This should also help minimize pain and aid in your recovery. Ice should be applied every hour (while awake) for 20 minutes each time and for the first 3-4 days after surgery. It will be

visually noticeable that you had surgery for 2-3 weeks. After 3 weeks, the swelling may not be obvious to others but you will most likely continue to “feel swollen” for up to 6 months while you continue to fully heal.

- **Bruising/Discoloration:** Areas of your face and neck may become bruised especially during the first week after surgery. The bruising will fade into a light yellow color and eventually disappear 2-3 weeks post-operatively. We recommend taking Arnica (homeopathic medication) tablets approximately 3-5 days prior to your surgery and then continuing for the week after your surgery. Arnica cream/gel may also be applied to areas prone to bruising-around your eyes, nose, neck, jawline, and/or behind your ears. If you have an allergy to ***, we recommend not using Arnica.
- **Numbness:** It is normal to experience some numbness in the areas that were operated on, particularly the scalp, nose, lower lip, and chin. Sensation will gradually improve over the next several weeks and could take up to several months to fully heal.

What to Avoid After Your Surgery:

- **Aspirin or Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) Medications:** Aspirin or NSAIDs such as Motrin, Advil, and Aleve may cause bleeding and should be avoided until 10 days after your surgery. **It is also important that you let your surgeon know if you are taking any other blood thinning medications on a daily basis such as Coumadin, Pradaxa, Eliquis, Asprin or Celebrex.**
- **Strenuous Activity and Exercise:** Avoid heavy lifting (>20lbs) for at least 2 weeks after your surgery. Straining, bending, and extreme exercise too soon after surgery can cause bleeding and negatively affect your healing process. You should resume light activity such as walking within the first couple of days after surgery. Gradually increase your activity over the next 4 weeks; at this time you may resume your usual routine.
- **Blood Clots:** Not moving and staying in bed can causes blood clots in your legs or lungs. After surgery, make sure to stand up

and walk to keep the blood moving in your legs and help prevent blood clots.

Postoperative Care Instructions:

- **Pain Medication:** The pain medication that you are prescribed may be taken every 4-6 hours as needed and works best if taken regularly especially during the first few days after your surgery. Your pain and the need for medication will gradually decrease over the following few weeks after surgery. The pain medication is a mixture of acetaminophen (Tylenol) and a narcotic, so no additional Tylenol should be taken. You may switch entirely to Tylenol or alternate Tylenol with the prescribed pain medicine to limit the amount of Tylenol taken to 3,000-mg in 24 hours. Sometimes pain medications can cause nausea. To avoid this, you should take it with food. It's also important to take an over the counter stool softener and drink plenty of water to prevent constipation. **Do not drive or drink alcoholic beverages of any kind while taking this medication.**
- **Showering/Bathing:** It's okay to bathe or shower after your surgery but **keep your incision(s) and the surrounding area dry for 2 days after your surgery**. After 2 days have passed, you may gently wet/clean your incision using soap or shampoo/conditioner and water. Allow the areas with incisions to air dry or gently pat dry with a towel. Be careful to avoid direct contact with brush bristles or heat when drying your hair.
- **Incision Care:** It is normal to have some blood-tinged oozing or dry crusting along your incisions. You may clean any incision gently with a water-soaked gauze if there are clots or debris present. If additional cleaning is required, you can use a 50-50 mixture of warm water and hydrogen peroxide to apply to your incisions to help soften the clot/crusting and clean the area. After cleaning, apply a small amount of Aquaphor ointment to your incisions. Cleaning and Aquaphor ointment application should be

done twice per day. Aquaphor can be purchased at any major drug store (CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreen's etc.).

- **Head Elevation:** Beginning the first night after your surgery, it is important that you sleep on your back with your head elevated using at least 2 pillows to help minimize swelling. It is ideal to do this for the first 2 weeks after surgery. Keeping your head elevated while sleeping also prevents you from laying on your face.
- **Ice compress:** Cold wash cloths, preferably dipped in ice, should be applied to the affected areas for twenty minutes at a time for the first 3-4 days after surgery, including the evening of the surgery. Ideally, ice is applied every hour (while awake) for 20 minutes. This will help reduce swelling, discomfort, and discoloration. (If you had surgery on your nose do not place the compresses directly on your nose; instead, place ice on the cheeks, just next to the nose. Please see additional detailed instructions for Septorhinoplasty (Nose Surgery) post-operative care)
- **Eating:** Nausea/upset stomach occurs commonly from anesthesia and pain medications. We recommend starting with liquids and soft foods for the first few days after surgery. Slowly advance your diet to regular food as tolerated. If you have an incision in your mouth (for jaw reduction), we ask you to keep a soft diet for 1 week. A soft diet is made of anything that does not require significant chewing and is soft, for example smoothies, purees, soup, pasta. Remember to consume plenty of water. Avoid alcohol while taking pain medication.
- **Sun Exposure:** Avoid direct exposure to your face and neck. Use SPF 30 or higher beginning 4 weeks after your surgery.
- **Smoking: Do not smoke at all.** Smoking is not only dangerous to your overall health but it can be especially harmful during your recovery and can negatively impact wound healing. If you need assistance with quitting, please notify your surgeon as soon as possible.

When to call your Surgeon's Office:

- Fever higher than 101.0 ° F
- Sudden visual changes
- Severe headache or neck stiffness
- Severe diarrhea
- Severe pain unrelieved with prescribed pain medication
- Fullness of your forehead that is greater than expected
- Signs of infection including redness, excess oozing from your incisions, excess swelling that does not subside, or warmth from your incision(s)
- If you have any questions about your medications or instructions

Septorhinoplasty (Nose Surgery)

Additional detailed post-op information if your individualized facial feminization surgery includes nose surgery.

What to Expect After Your Surgery:

- **Nasal congestion and difficulty breathing through your nose:** Expect to have congestion and difficulty breathing through your nose during the first week after surgery. This is caused by blood, mucus, splints, and swelling inside of your nose. One week after surgery you will have your first post-operative appointment. At this time you will most likely have the cast, sutures, and splints removed which will help relieve the congestion and allow you to breathe more easily through your nose. Over the next 1-2 weeks the congestion and ease of breathing through your nose will continue to improve.
- **Swelling and Bruising:** It is normal to have noticeable swelling and bruising around your outer nose and around your eyes. During the first 2-3 weeks the swelling will be visually noticeable to others, after that you may continue to “feel swollen” for up to 6 months before full recovery occurs.
- **Bleeding:** It is normal to have a small amount of nasal bleeding and continuous dripping of blood from the nose for several days after your surgery. If the nasal bleeding does not subside, use Original Afrin Nasal Spray (2 puffs to your nostrils twice daily). If you experience a steady flow or stream of blood from the nose and Afrin fails to help then you should call your surgeon’s office.

What to Avoid After Your Surgery:

- **Nose Blowing and Straining:** You should avoid straining or blowing your nose for at least 2 weeks following surgery. Avoid heavy lifting (> 20 lbs) for at least 2 weeks after surgery. Straining or nose blowing soon after your surgery may cause bleeding and negatively impact your healing process. You can resume light activity and exercise 2 weeks after surgery and more strenuous exercise 4 weeks after surgery.

- **Avoid trauma to your nose:** Try not to bend over, bump your nose, or roll onto your face while sleeping. **If your surgeon has reshaped your nose by breaking the bones of the nose, avoid wearing glasses of any kind or resting anything on your nose for 6 weeks after surgery. If you had osteotomies, you should avoid contact sports for 6 weeks after surgery.**

Postoperative Care Instructions:

- **Nasal Saline Spray:** 2 sprays of nasal saline mist spray should be sprayed into your nostrils every 2-3 hours after surgery. These sprays (Ocean, Simple Saline) are over-the-counter medications and can be purchased in any pharmacy (Walgreens, CVS etc).
- **Ice Compress:** You should apply ice packs or wash cloths dipped in ice water to your cheeks and closed eyes (**Do not place the compresses directly on your nose**) for 20 minutes at a time every 2-3 hours for the first 2 days following surgery. If you do not ice your cheeks/eyes as instructed your eyes may temporarily swell shut and the increased swelling can cause unwanted pressure to your healing incisions.

When to call your Surgeon's Office:

- Steady, brisk nose bleeding that doesn't get better after using Afrin

Face Lift (Rhytidectomy)

Additional detailed post-op information if your individualized facial feminization surgery includes a face lift.

What to Expect After Your Surgery:

- **Face/Neck Tightness:** Your face and neck will feel tight after your surgery. This is to be expected due to swelling and is an indication of a correctly performed face lift.

What to Avoid After Your Surgery:

- **Turning of the Head:** Avoid turning your head or bending your neck. If you have to turn, move the shoulders and head as one unit.
- **Bandage Care:** You will be provided with an elastic facial dressing to **wear continuously for the first 3 days postoperatively** and then only at night for the following week. Please do not wear your bandage while showering.
- **Drain Care:** Before awakening from your surgery, drains will be placed on either side of your neck. Your neck will be wrapped with gauze and with a tight elastic bandage. The drains will be removed on the morning after surgery.
- **Ice compress:** Cold wash cloths, preferably dipped in ice, should be applied across your jaw and neck for twenty minutes at a time several times daily for the first 2-3 days postoperatively. This should help reduce swelling, discomfort, and discoloration.

When to Call Your Surgeon's Office:

- Severe pain or swelling on one side of the face and/or neck or severe pain unrelieved with prescribed pain medication