



## Care after facelift and necklift surgery

### Part 3 of 3

This leaflet explains what to expect after a facelift and necklift. **It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please initial each page** to show that you have read it. For information on the surgery, and the risks and complications of facelifts and necklifts, please see parts 1 and 2.

### What to expect after the operation

Facelifts and necklifts are usually carried under a general anaesthetic (so you would be asleep) or a local anaesthetic (where the whole area is numbed with injections and you might be sedated). The operation takes between two and five hours.

You might be given antibiotics to keep the wound clean. You may have drainage tubes in your face or neck to drain away any fluid or blood. These tubes will be taken out when the fluid or blood has stopped draining, usually before you go home.

You might go home the same day, but most likely you will stay in hospital overnight. If you do go home on the same day, a responsible adult should stay with you for the night. Your face and neck will feel tight and sore. Simple painkillers should be enough to keep you comfortable.

### Dressings

You will have some dressings on your face and neck. Most surgeons will bandage your face to reduce bruising and swelling. These bandages will stay on for one or two days, and the stitches will be removed after seven or eight days.

### Recovery

It is normal for there to be some numbness of the skin of the cheeks and ears. This will usually improve in a few weeks or months, although there may be long-term loss of sensitivity of the skin in front of your ears. It is better to keep your head up to reduce swelling. In particular, sleep with extra pillows to keep your head raised for the first few days after surgery.

You will be out of bed on the same day as your surgery, and doing light activities after two weeks. Avoid strenuous activity, saunas and massage for at least two weeks.

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At first your face will look a little puffy and may feel rather strange and stiff. The scars can be very well hidden with your hair so that you can return to work and socialising within a couple of weeks.

Men find it more difficult than women to disguise the scars, and their beard will grow closer to their ears as a result of the skin being lifted.

Camouflage make-up can be helpful in covering bruising. The scars in the hairline do not usually show, but the hair will have been cut shorter immediately around the wound. There may be some slight reduction in hair growth in the temples, but this is not usually a problem unless the hair is very thin and several facelifts are carried out.

Do not lift heavy things for several weeks, and avoid bending down or having sex for at least two weeks. With all activities, start gently. Do not drive until you feel safe and are comfortable wearing a seatbelt. Check your insurance documents if you are not sure.

### **Seeing the results**

At first your face and neck skin may seem too tight. This usually settles down within six weeks of the operation. Most patients are pleased with the final result, but some find their new shape difficult to get used to. This may happen to you. You cannot judge the final result of your facelift or necklift for about six to nine months.

Even if the operation is a success, you may need another operation in the future to have the skin tightened again.

### **Your aftercare**

To protect your body, and get the best result, look after yourself.

Avoid vigorous activities after your operation.

Protect your wounds as you are told to.

Putting on weight or being pregnant will affect the results.

Maintain a healthy weight and level of exercise.

### **What to look out for**

Bleeding after surgery can cause swelling, a change in colour, and pain, usually just on one side. The signs of an infection are pain, redness, swelling and pus in the wound, and you may also have a temperature.

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A blood clot in the leg can cause swelling and pain in the calf. If the clot goes to the lung, you might be breathless or have pain in your chest.

If the wound is not healing well, it may be sore and weep.

If you have any worries after your operation, speak to a doctor or go to A&E.

### **Important contact details for your surgery**

#### **Disclaimer**

This document is designed to give you useful information. It is not advice on your specific needs and circumstances. It does not replace the need for you to have a thorough consultation, so you should get advice from a suitably qualified medical practitioner. We – The BAAPS and BAPRAS – have no liability for any decision you make about the surgery you decide to have.

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