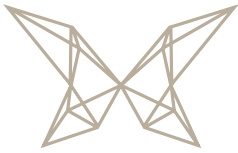


# **Postoperative Instructions**

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**FACELIFT AND NECKLIFT**

**Dr Rory Dower**



# Postoperative Instructions

## Facelift and Necklift

You have undergone a surgical procedure in a day clinic setting and will spend some time in recovery, before being discharged home. If this procedure is combined with other procedures, you may require an overnight stay. It is important for you to arrange to have either a friend or family member drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 - 48 hours.

## What to Expect

### IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY

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- Despite feeling tired and sore for a few days, you should be up and about the day after surgery
- Maximum discomfort will occur in the first few days
- You will have swelling around the face and ears, as well as bruising and tightness of the skin. Bruising and tightness will usually settle in around 10-14 days, but swelling will take longer to resolve. You should try to sit upright as much as possible to help the swelling reduce faster.
- Wearing scarves, turtlenecks and high-collared blouses masks the swelling and discoloration
- Facial makeup can be applied to cover up bruising 3 days after surgery, but not on the incisions
- By the third week, you will look and feel much better
- It will take 6 weeks before you look good in a photograph or can attend an important function
- Sometimes pain, swelling or bruising may be slightly different between the two sides. Although this is usually normal, if a great difference develops between the two sides, please contact Dr. Dower's rooms
- You may experience some numbness of the operative areas. This will usually settle with time

### LONG TERM

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- A fuller, more youthful cheek contour
- A smoother, straighter jawline
- A smoother, tauter neckline
- Improved skin texture and clarity
- Improved facial shape - In women, heart shaped and more youthful. In men, squarer and more masculine.

## Medication and Handling pain

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- Following surgery, cold cooling pads are applied to reduce swelling and discomfort for the first couple of hours
- Once you are at home, rest quietly and apply cold compresses to the eyes for 15-20 minutes of every hour that you are awake for the first 3 days after surgery. This is easily done by taking eye pads and moistening them, before putting them in the refrigerator. Once cold, they are then applied over the eyelids. Do this even if you have not had eyelid surgery
- If you have had lip augmentation, apply iced compresses to the lips for 15-20 minutes of every hour that you are awake, for the first 3 days after surgery
- Please DO NOT apply ice directly to the skin, as this may cause a burn, especially where you have decreased sensation
- You may recommence your normal medication the day after surgery unless otherwise advised
- Take pain medication as prescribed.
- In order to "break" the pain cycle, we recommend taking the pain meds regularly, as prescribed, for the first 3 days, even if discomfort is only mild
- Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin for the week following surgery, unless this is for a medical condition, in which case please discuss this with Dr Dower
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medication

# Dr Rory Dower

## Postoperative Instructions | Facelift and Necklift

### Wound Care, Stitches, Dressings And Drains

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- You will have the first set of stitches removed at 5 days after your operation and your drain will most likely come out around this time too
- The next set of stitches behind your ear and in your hairline will come out at 7 days
- Any other stitches you feel after this which have been crusted over will be removed at 2 weeks.
- Keeping the wounds clean (this routine can be followed once to twice daily):
  - Dip an earbud into hydrogen peroxide and use this to gently clean around the edges of the wound, removing crusts and dried blood. DO NOT use around eyes
  - Wash the face with a mild facial wash such as Cetaphil.
  - Gently pat the wound dry with a clean towel or tissue
  - Apply antibiotic ointment such as bactroban, supiroban or chloromycetin to the wound edges

### Showering and Bathing

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- You may shower or bath after 48 hours, but take care not to bathe or soak the incision sites for the first 2 weeks
- Wash your hair gently, using a mild shampoo with your head back 'salon style'. This will help to prevent the shampoo from irritating the wound. Initially, it will probably be best to have someone help you
- When drying your hair, dab dry the incisions and remember not to rub or remove any scabs. A hair detangler may help get out knots and soften the hair. Remember to be delicate when brushing.
- A hair dryer can be used on a warm (not hot) setting
- It is important to remember that parts of your scalp and face may feel numb for a while after surgery. Be careful when showering or bathing to make sure that the water is not too hot and take care when using your hair dryer or curling irons
- Do not perm, color, highlight or chemically treat your hair for 14 days after surgery

### Sleeping

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- Sleep flat on your back without a pillow for 10 days, in order to 'open up the neck' and allow the skin to drape properly. This avoids bunching of the skin below the chin, which may compromise your final result. In general, this principle should be followed throughout the day, whether resting, watching TV or reading a book. If more comfortable, you may use a small cylindrical neck roll when lying down. After 10 days, you may sleep with your normal pillows
- Due to the fact that there is likely to be some degree of soiling of your wounds, try to use old linen in case this gets stained

### Level of Activity and Exercise and Driving

- Start walking as soon as possible after surgery to reduce the risk of blood clots in your lower legs
- Although you can gently walk about and do light duties for the first 7-10 days, please avoid activities that increase blood flow to your head. This includes straining, bending over or lifting heavy objects. To pick something up from the floor, lower yourself down by bending your knees rather than leaning forward
- When you return to work or social activities will depend on how quickly you recover and your own individual circumstances. In general leave at least 2 weeks to recover from your surgery, during which time you will most likely want to be 'out of sight'.
- You may want to take additional time off if you have an important presentation, family gathering, vacation etc. Keep in mind that at 6 weeks you will look better than you did before surgery
- You may resume light exercises at around 2 weeks and your normal exercise routine at around 4 weeks
- Body contact sports should be avoided for 6-8 weeks
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks post-operatively
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication
- If you are doing something that is causing you pain, this is usually the body's natural warning system to take it easy and not over exert yourself

# Dr Rory Dower

## Postoperative Instructions | Facelift and Necklift

### Smoking and Alcohol

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- Avoid smoking for the first 4 weeks after surgery as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications
- Avoid alcohol for at least 72 hours after surgery, as this may increase your risk of bleeding

### Diet

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- Everyone recovers from their anesthetic differently. Some people feel no side effects while others are more noticeably affected, feeling tired and even sick for the first couple of days
- Eat lightly with small meals throughout the day to minimize sickness
- Drink plenty of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices, in the first few days after surgery
- Avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks for the first few days

### What to Wear

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- It is best to wear comfortable, loose, front opening clothing that does not need to be pulled over your head for the first few weeks

### Scar Management

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- A scar takes 9-12 months to reach full maturity at which stage the final result will be evident.
- The scars may become a little more pink and noticeable, even red and lumpy temporarily before they start to improve.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 50 or greater)
- Scar science can be used to improve the appearance of the scar. You can start applying this from 6 weeks post-operatively. For the first 2-6 weeks of treatment, the cream should be applied over the Micropore tape. After this, it can be applied directly to the scar. For the scar science to have a beneficial effect, it should be used for a period of at least 6 months from the date of surgery. After 1 year the scar has reached maturity and there is no further benefit
- If not using scar science, you can apply Micropore tape to the incisions for 6 months, changing this every 7 to 10 days. Do not remove the tape every day as it will cause irritation of the surrounding skin. Incision areas may be massaged over the Micropore tape to help improve the scar
- Local massage to the scar is usually begun at around 4 weeks. Use your normal body lotion creams or Bio-Oil to facilitate this action
- Do not use any creams containing Vitamin E to treat the incision areas for the first 3 months

### When should I call?

- Fresh bleeding, other than that of a minor nature
- Pain not relieved by pain relieving tablets
- Sudden onset new and worsening pain
- Excessive swelling or redness
- Increased redness along the incision sites
- Discharge or foul odour from the incision sites
- Fever of 38 degrees Celsius or above
- Any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache or vomiting
- Increased pain in your calves, shortness of breath, or chest pain

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**EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER: +27 (0)82 876 1097**