

## Postoperative Instructions for your Blepharoplasty (Eyelid) Surgery

### After your surgery

You will be taken to the recovery area to awaken from your anesthesia. In this area, your progress will be monitored. You will wake up with an intravenous in place to supply you with fluids until you are able to drink.

You will have small ice bags applied to your face to help reduce the swelling. Bags of frozen peas work well for this because they are lightweight, stay cold for a long time and also conform well to the contour of your face.

You will remain at the surgery center until your vital signs are stable, you are awake and alert, and are taking fluids without problems. This may be from 1 to 3 hours depending on your response to the anesthesia.

### General Instructions and Information

**Cold Compress:** Immediately upon arriving at home, apply compress consisting of 4 x 4 gauze pads or a washcloth soaked in ice water to the eyelids for the first 48 hours post-operatively and change every 30 minutes to help assist in reducing swelling. They should be used for at least 30 minutes out of every hour for the first day. You do not need to be woken-up to use cold packs when you are sleeping. But if you do awaken, 30 minutes of cold application would be appropriate. Frozen peas or corn in zip lock baggies make very good cold packs that conform well to the eye areas. Change them as needed to keep cold. Be careful not to freeze the skin. A paper or thin cloth towel can help to protect the skin. The second day ice packs should be used for 30 minutes every two hours, or more frequently if desired. Continue cold compresses over the eyelids for 2 days, and then switch to warm moist heat.

**Swelling and Bruising** - You can expect swelling and black and blue discoloration of the eyelids. Most people find that the bruising around their eyes reaches its peak during the 2-4 days after surgery. This usually takes 7-14 days to resolve. Complete healing may take up to 12 months. You will experience swelling and bruising in your face, cheeks and sometimes down to your neck after any eyelid or midfacial surgery. This is temporary and typically resolves within 7-14 days and may be covered with makeup. Our skin care specialists will be happy to show you variations on applying coverage during your healing process.

**Head Elevation** - For the first week following surgery, keep your head elevated as much as possible in order to minimize the swelling. If you can, sleep on two or three pillows to keep your head above the level of your heart for 1-2 weeks following your surgery. To accomplish this, place two or three pillows under the head of the mattress and one or two on top of the mattress. Try not to roll on to your face. Some patients find a reclining chair placed at a 45-degree angle to be more comfortable than a bed. Do not bend over, tie your shoes, perform any lifting, and avoid any other activity where your face is below the level of your heart. If you have little children, bend at the knees or sit on the floor and let them climb in to your lap.

**Medication and Pain Relief - Discomfort** is usually relatively mild after blepharoplasty although, this will vary. Most patients require little pain medication. Take pain medication prescribed from Dr. Heir as directed. This is usually sufficient for discomfort after your eyelid surgery if ice or cold packs are being used properly. If you are not sufficiently relieved of pain, try alternating doses of Extra Strength Tylenol<sup>®</sup> and the pain medication prescribed by Dr. Heir. Complete any prescribed medications that may have been prescribed for you. Do not take aspirin containing medications for 10 days after surgery, Ibuprofen for 10 days after surgery and Vitamin E for 3 weeks after surgery.

**Contact lenses** - Glasses may be worn after surgery. Contacts and eye makeup should not be worn until the doctor says you may do so. Typically you may begin wearing contacts after the sutures are removed.

**Eye Lubrication** - If you experience any redness or dryness of the eye you may purchase Lacrilube to use at night and artificial tears for the daytime hours. Symptoms after eyelid surgery (e.g., itching, irritation, stinging, redness, pain, even tearing) are almost always due to dryness of the surface of the eye. There is no such thing as too much eye lubrication, so use the drops and ointment liberally.

**Vision** - Blurriness, excessive tears & sensitivity to light - Temporary changes to your vision are not unusual, nor should you be alarmed if you seem to be tearing up more than normal. Wearing sunglasses can help reduce your sensitivity to light during these few days.

**Bleeding** - A small amount of bleeding is normal. **If the bleeding is excessive, or if you have ANY decrease in vision, contact the office immediately.**

**Make-Up and Cleaning** - You may wash your face but keep any dressings dry. Do not use any makeup over the incisions until they are well healed. You may cleanse gently with Q-tips as needed, just be gentle. You may apply a thin layer of healing ointment (per Dr. Heir's instructions) with a Q-tip to prevent crusting along the incisions. Make-up may be applied 24 hours after the last sutures are removed (usually the fifth or sixth post-operative day). When you do resume using makeup, obtain new eye make up and mascara to replace old ones. **They may contain bacteria from prior use.** Often patient's state they are interested in learning new techniques or trying new eye make up colors after their surgery to enhance their "new look." Our skin care specialist will be happy to assist you. We offer this service to help you maximize the benefits of your surgery.

**Activities** - Avoid extreme physical activity including athletic activities and intercourse. You may resume light walking three days after surgery. Aerobic exercise, weight training, heavy lifting, and straining may be gradually resumed three weeks after surgery.

**Sun Exposure** - Keep eyes (incisions) out of the sun for at least 4 months. Use sunglasses, sunscreen and a hat if you are going to be out. Wear sunglasses when outdoors for the first several weeks after the procedure.

**Bathing** - You may shower, wash your hair, and allow soap and water to contact the incisions and sutures as early as the first operative-operative day.

**Hair Care** - Hair may be washed the day following surgery. Avoid bending your head over. When you wash your hair the hair should be rinsed backward, do not get your eyelids or face wet. Hair may be colored 7 days after surgery.

**Skin Care** - Do not use Retin-A, or any alpha hydroxy acids near the eye area for one month after surgery.

**Exposures** - Avoid places where you may be exposed to noxious fumes, dust or other air contaminants.

**Tobacco** - DO NOT SMOKE for a minimum of 8 weeks after surgery. This significantly can slow the healing process.

**Driving** - Do not drive a car or operate hazardous machinery for 4-5 days and as long as pain limits movement or pain medication is required.

### **Eyelid Incision Care**

1) You must take care to avoid all traumas to your eyes. **Do not rub your eyes.** The stitches are removed 5 to 7 postoperatively.

2) For a week and a half following blepharoplasty, you will clean the eye area (the eyes may feel sticky, dry, and itchy). If you have external eyelid incisions, they may be gently cleaned with a Q-tip and half-strength hydrogen peroxide (dilute with water).

3) Avoid any ointments unless instructed by Dr. Heir.

4) After the sutures are removed or dissolve continue to cleanse the areas until they are healed.

5) One month from the day of surgery you may begin to gently massage the incision sites as many times per day as you can, applying light pressure in a circular motion. Apply light pressure in a circular motion by using lotion on your fingers.

5) If tapes are applied after the sutures are removed leave them on for at least 5 days. You can wash over them and remove them after 5 days if they have not already come off.

### **DON'T TAKE CHANCES!**

If you are concerned about anything you consider significant, or if **there is any unusual pain, discomfort, swelling, redness, bleeding or a temperature greater than 100 F, please notify Dr. Heir at 916-419-4588 IMMEDIATELY. If the office is closed, please dial Ext 5 to be connected with Dr. Heir's cell phone.**