

Vargas Face and Skin Center

Hannah Vargas, MD

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GENERAL SURGERY POST OP INSTRUCTIONS

Anesthesia

After anesthesia, you may feel nauseated for the first 24 hours. The effects of anesthesia may cause you to vomit as well. You may take the prescribed anti-nausea medication to alleviate your symptoms. If your vomiting persists despite medication, please contact us. You should feel much better by the next day. If you are still suffering from nausea and vomiting after the first TWO days, please consult us. If you were sedated or underwent general anesthesia, do not drive or operate any machinery as you may cause injury to yourself or others. Sometimes the narcotic pain medications you are taking may also cause an upset stomach and/or nausea. Try taking these medications with food, or abstain from taking them if they cause undue nausea and vomiting. It is also natural for you to feel fatigue for the first 2-3 days after the surgery as your body recovers from the combined effects of surgery and anesthesia.

Showering and Water Exposure

Please do not get your wound area wet until all bandages (or your nasal splints) have been removed. If you do not have bandages, please do not shower or get your wound wet for the first 24 hours. After this period of time and after your bandages are off you may shower and gently dry your wounds. After the first day, you may gently wash your face with mild soap and water. Try avoiding any vigorous cleansing of the suture line.

Wound Care

Be sure you are washing your hands with anti-bacterial soap prior to any cleaning of incisions or touching your face. The suture line should be cleaned 2 to 3 times daily with a Q-Tip or cotton balls soaked in hydrogen peroxide. Again, care should be taken as the sutures are delicate and can be broken if vigorously cleansed. Blot dry and apply ointment, such as Aquaphor, to the wound edges with a clean Q-Tip so that a crust (scab) does not form. Any over the counter ointment will suffice. Also, you may refrain from applying any ointment at night so as not to soil your bed sheets. Try to use a Q-Tip or cotton ball instead of your fingers when applying ointment to avoid an infection in our suture line.

Apply ice packs over the wound for the first 24-48 hours, as it will significantly reduce your post-operative swelling and cut down on recovery time. You may do so every 20 minutes to one hour as it is convenient. After the first two (2) days, ice packing will not lessen any swelling.

Normal showering is allowed on the first day after surgery. If some of the ointment comes off while washing your hair, or surrounding area, simply re-apply additional ointment after showering.

Sleeping at night with your head elevated with a couple of pillows to also help reduce the amount of swelling and reduce your recovery time. Sleep on your back or side only.

Avoid any ice packs directly to your face, as you may burn yourself unknowingly. After surgery, your wound area will be numb for several weeks, and you may burn yourself if you apply too hot of an object (such as a curling iron to your hair or even a blow dryer while drying hair) near your operated skin.

Any unexplained development of pain, facial swelling, or fever should be reported immediately.

If you routinely wear make-up, please refrain from doing so for at least one week after surgery. Make-up may cause significant irritation to the skin and also adversely affect your wound from healing. Additionally, perfumes and colognes may irritate your wounds. Minimize or abstain from using these types of products near your wounds.

When sutures have been removed, you may stop applying antibiotic ointment. You may start to apply Silicon Band-Aids to the suture line, which will help with wound healing (*As advised in your Pre-Operative Instructions, taking Vitamin E pills or gel is prohibited so as to minimize any chance of bleeding*).

It is very important to your well-being that you follow all instructions completely, and that we check your progress regularly following your surgery.

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Antibiotics

You may have been prescribed several days, to a week, of oral antibiotics. Please take this medication as prescribed. It is recommended you take your antibiotics with food to minimize any chance of stomach upset. If you are nauseated, please wait until the nausea is gone before resuming your antibiotic medications. If diarrhea should occur, please contact our office regarding this matter. If you should develop a fever greater than 101 degrees after the first two days, please consult us. Eating yogurt or other probiotics while on antibiotics will reduce the chance of diarrhea.

Pain Management

If you have significant pain after surgery, please take the prescribed pain medication. Please be sure not to take your pain medication any more frequently than prescribed. Also, as this medication is a narcotic, you are advised against driving or operating any machinery while taking your medication. If you have only mild pain, you may take Tylenol to alleviate your symptoms. However, if you take Tylenol, you should wait four hours before resuming your other pain medications, as they also contain Tylenol. Do not take exceed more than 4,000mg of Tylenol in 24 hours. You should also avoid taking any other pain medications, especially aspirin or aspirin-related medications, including NSAID'S or Ibuprofen. It is advised that you begin a stool softener if you are taking prescription pain medicine to prevent constipation. If you develop any unexplained pain, you should report this to us immediately.

Bruising and Swelling

It is normal that you have moderate or even significant bruising and swelling after surgery for the first two (2) weeks. You will notice daily bruising and swelling diminishing. However, if you develop any new onset swelling, especially in the first week. Please consult us immediately.

Sun Exposure

Excessive exposure to sun in the first three (3) weeks after surgery may result in prolonged facial swelling and injury to the skin. Also, excessive sun exposure to your wound area may cause your wound to darken (hyper pigment) in relation to surrounding skin. If you must go into the sunlight, wear a wide-brimmed hat and apply a SPF 15 sunscreen preparation, preferably with titanium or zinc dioxide, which is available at our office.

Exercise and Activity

For the first two (2) weeks, please refrain from bending over or straining. It is advised that you begin a stool softener if you are taking pain medicine to prevent constipation. It is acceptable to begin light walking 24 hours after surgery. Jogging and light non-contact exercise should not be resumed until two (2) weeks after surgery. Strenuous sports require six (6) weeks of healing before being safely resumed, depending on the type of surgery. If you feel that you are too weak to perform a given activity, you should listen to your body and rest appropriately.

Other Things You Should Avoid

Please re-read the Pre-Operative Instructions carefully, review all medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements you should avoid before and after surgery, including advice about smoking and drinking. If you should have any questions about your surgery or about any of the instructions written above, please do not hesitate to contact us at 816-942-5900.

[End of General Surgery Post Op Instructions]