**Dr Staltari’s Postoperative Head and Neck Instructions**

**What TO DO:**

* Dressings may be removed 48 hours after surgery. If Steri-Strips (thin white tape bandages) are applied, these may be removed gently as they yellow and curl.
* Antibiotic ointments (Neosporin, Polysporin, Mupirocin, Bactroban, etc) may be used for the first 3 days on the incision
* After 3 days of antibiotic ointment use, moisturizing lotions like Aquaphor should be used instead
* A replacement dressing may be applied to your incision for your comfort
* Surgical area may be cleaned with warm, soapy water and patted dry after 48 hours from surgery.
* Some pain is expected and is best treated with Tylenol, Motrin, and warm/cool compresses as comfortable. Narcotic (Percocet, Norco, Vicodin, codeine, oxycodone, etc) medication may be provided for severe pain.

**What NOT TO DO:**

* Do not wet incision before 48 hours from surgery
* Do not itch or scratch the incision
* Do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds or perform strenuous exercise until cleared by Dr. Staltari
* While bathing or showering, do NOT soak incision and do NOT rub incision to dry.
* Avoid sun exposure of the incision to prevent scarring or discoloration. Use sunscreen for the first year to help achieve the best cosmetic result.
* Do NOT take narcotic pain medication (Percocet, Norco, Vicodin, codeine, oxycodone, etc) except exactly as prescribed and only as needed for severe pain that does not respond to Tylenol or Motrin.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Your First Post-Operative Visit**: Your postoperative visit should be scheduled at the time of scheduling surgery. If it hasn’t been or you do not remember your visit date, time, and office location, please call any of our office locations for assistance or to schedule a visit 1 week after surgery or as otherwise directed.

**Returning to School or Work**: Each patient and each surgery tolerates recovery differently. Many patients feel comfortable to resume light duty work or school 3-5 days after surgery. If more time for recuperation is required, that is understandable. Do not perform heavy duty or strenuous work unless otherwise cleared by Dr. Staltari. The office will be able to provide a work excuse if necessary.

**Pain**: Pain is, unfortunately, expected after any surgery. Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Motrin (ibuprofen) are great medications to treat post-surgical pain. A narcotic pain medicine script may be provided for severe pain that does not respond to Tylenol or Motrin.

**Diet:** For external surgeries you may resume a normal diet. If you had surgery to your tongue or throat, please eat soft foods and high calorie/protein shakes until follow up. All patients should stay hydrated and take in healthy calories with plenty of protein and carbohydrates to help the healing process. Fruits and vegetables are always ok!

**Bleeding:** Often times, some bloody spotting of bandages may occur. Bandages in the first three days may be replaced if this occurs or if they are soiled. If bleeding is excessive or concerning or if the incision line or body becomes swollen, tender, or overly bruised, please call the office immediately for guidance.

**Lifting:** Avoid lifting anything greater than 10 pounds until cleared by Dr. Staltari.

**Temperature**: Generally, the body temperature does not rise much above 100° following surgery, and this rise is due to the fact that the patient becomes mildly dehydrated because he/she does not drink enough fluids. Patients will often think they have fever because they feel warm, but, in reality do not. To be sure you should measure your temperature. Report any persistent temperature above 101° however.

**Medications**: Unless otherwise directed, all medications ordered by a physician before surgery may be resumed after surgery. If prophylactic baby aspirin is used, please do not resume baby aspirin use until day 3 after surgery.

**Cold/Warm Compresses:** These may be used if they are comfortable after surgery. Do not place ice directly on skin. Be careful, as the incision is often numb after surgery. Ensure that compresses are not too hot or cold to comfortably hold in the hand.

**Swelling:** Swelling is natural after surgery as the body works to heal the area. Swelling can be decreased by sleeping with the head of bed elevated with several pillows.