

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR ORAL AND FACIAL SURGERY

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## LASER COSMETIC SURGERY- POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Surgery of any kind places a stress on your body. Get adequate rest and avoid strenuous activity for a few days following your procedure. If you received intravenous sedation or general anesthesia, it is important for someone to stay with you until you have recovered from the effects of these medications.

Initially after laser treatment, the treated area will look as if it has been burned. The immediate response may be a slight "whitening" of the surface and redness in the surrounding skin. Complete healing of the laser treated site may take several weeks. It can appear pink or red until completely healed. Some flaking and superficial crusting is expected during the first week. Areas that were treated for deeper wrinkles will have a heavier yellow crust and may take longer to heal and become of normal color.

We want your healing to be as comfortable and easy as possible. Please follow the following instructions:

### 1. **Bleeding:**

Bleeding should be minimal after CO<sub>2</sub> laser surgery. A small amount of oozing can occur from some spots. This should stop on its own and not require any treatment. If, however, bleeding continues, apply constant pressure with a gauze pad over the surgical site. If significant bleeding still occurs, call the office for advice.

### 2. **Swelling:**

Swelling and bruising are normal reactions to surgery, and vary from patient to patient and from one surgery to another. These are usually less with the laser than with other techniques. During the first 24 hours after treatment, keep your head elevated above the level of the heart. Sleep on 2 or 3 pillows to keep your head elevated at night. This will help to decrease swelling. You should also use an ice pack next to the surgical site for the first 24 hours. Alternate 20 minutes with ice with 20 minutes without ice. After the first 24 hours, the ice will not have much effect on swelling, but may make the surgical site feel better. Swelling usually reaches its maximum about 48 - 72 hours after surgery. Eyelids will generally have more swelling than other areas.

### 3. **Infection/ Wound Care:**

Laser procedures in healthy patients have a low risk of developing an infection. Clean your face twice daily with mild soap. Do not rub your face or use a washcloth, as this disturbs the healing layers. Pat the area dry with a clean towel, then apply a thin layer of Bactroban or other antibiotic ointment. Keep the area clean, and always covered with a thin layer of antibiotic ointment or recommended lubricant. Do not remove crusts, but keep them soft and moist at all times. They will fall off naturally in 1 to 2 weeks. You will be placed on antibiotics for 5 to 7 days after surgery. It is important to follow the directions on the label and take the medication until it is completely gone. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the office immediately.

There may be a slight elevation in temperature for 24 to 48 hours after surgery. This is a normal body response to the surgery. If the temperature persists or is greatly elevated, please notify the office.

### 4. **Pain:**

Initial pain is usually minimal following laser surgery. The treated area will feel similar to a sunburn. It is normal for the discomfort to increase around the third or fourth day after surgery. A pain reliever will also be prescribed for you. This medication may make you drowsy, so you should not drive a car or perform any important tasks while taking the medication. If you have only minor pain, try an over-the-counter drug, such as Tylenol or Advil. Avoid aspirin and aspirin-containing products, as these interfere with blood clotting. The pain medication should never be taken on an empty stomach. If you develop hives or a rash, discontinue all medication and contact the office immediately.

**5. Bathing:**

The skin treated with the laser is now "thin" and needs to be treated delicately. You may wash, bathe or shower normally and gently massage the treated areas. Be careful not to rub off the new skin. Pat dry with a clean towel, and be sure to apply the antibiotic ointment or moisturizer afterwards.

**6. Exercise:**

Mild to moderate physical exercise is permitted, but heavy perspiring should be avoided. In addition, you should not go swimming for at least two weeks after the laser procedure.

**7. Sun Protection:**

When the crust has fallen off, new pink skin will be exposed. It needs to be protected from the sun. Unprotected exposure to the sun may cause the area to heal darker than the normal skin. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 for **one year** following treatment.

**8.** A light diet is best after surgery. You may eat anything that does not require much chewing. Eat as much as you like, but do not overdo it.

**9. Smoking** delays healing and will increase the risk of infection and breakdown of the surgical site. Smoking should be avoided or greatly reduced during the healing period.

**10. Make-up** may not be used over the treated area for at least **ten (10) days** after laser treatment.

**11. Medications:**

\_\_\_ Keflex 250 mg every 6 hours for one week

\_\_\_ Erythromycin 500 mg every 6 hours for one week

\_\_\_ Zovirax 800 mg 3 times per day for one week

\_\_\_ Tylenol PM: two tablets every 4 - 6 hours as needed for pain

\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ tablets every \_\_\_\_\_ hours as needed for moderate pain

***Should you have any post-operative problems or questions, do not hesitate to call the office so we may help you.***