

# Kimberly Cockerham, MD, FACS

## Eyelid Surgery Instructions

### Pre-Surgery

- **Two weeks prior, STOP taking all medications listed on the Avoid List:**
  - Aspirin and aspirin-containing products
  - All anti-inflammatory medications such as Motrin® – only Tylenol® is acceptable
  - All supplements including flax seed, fish oil and vitamins
- **Two days prior, START taking:**
  - Arnica Forte® for swelling (one capsule twice daily for 5-day supply). This is optional supplement to minimize bruising and swelling
- **Day of Surgery:**
  - Arrive without make-up, in comfortable clothing.
  - You do not need to fast if you are having the procedure done with local anesthetic alone.
- **What to Expect During Surgery:**
  - Eye drops that numb the surface of your eyes will be placed in each eye. A blue plastic protector may then be placed in your eyes. The area of interest will be injected with a combination of lidocaine and Marcaine®. Your face will then be cleansed with Betadine® and sterile towels will be used to drape your head and chest.

### **Post-Surgery**

- You may feel stinging, which can be relieved with cool compresses and Tylenol. Apply cool compresses (zip lock bag with frozen peas, corn or blueberries works well and is inexpensive) directly to your eyelids. Use 20-30 minutes of each waking hour for the first two days.
- It is very important to avoid dusty or dirty environments.
- If eye drops have been prescribed, place in the operated eye twice daily.
- Start your antibiotic ointment – apply to incision twice daily.
- Your sutures will be removed 5–14 days after surgery depending on your procedure and how you heal.
- Continue your antibiotic ointment for one night after the sutures are removed.
- Contact the office if your incision opens or looks red, bumpy or starts to turn brown, excessively bleeding, feeling feverish, purulent drainage, significant vision loss.

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## **MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED POST-OP QUESTIONS / CONCERNS**

- **What to expect immediately after surgery:**
  - Oozing or bloody drainage at your incision site
    - This is normal. As long as it is not briskly bleeding and your stitches are not broken
  - Itching
    - Can take Benadryl (caution as this can make you drowsy), do NOT rub your eyes!
  - Bruising and swelling
    - Can initially get worse for the first 2-3 days, then should start to improve.
    - Bruising takes usually 1-2 weeks to improve
    - Swelling takes usually 3-4 weeks to improve
  - Dry/irritated eyes/tearing/blurry vision
    - Can have difficulty closing eyes for the first few days, this is normal. You can use preservative free artificial tears 4-6x/day.
- **Pain control**
  - Can take Tylenol (max strength, 500mg). Avoid ibuprofen, aleve, advil, Motrin or other NSAIDS for pain relief as this can worsen bleeding/bruising.
  - Cool compresses– every 20 minutes for the first 2-3 days. This will help the most with bruising and swelling. Don't directly place bag of pure ice as that can be heavy and break open your incisions. Can mix ice with water, frozen corn/peas, cold compresses or gel eye mask that can be frozen.
- **Resuming blood thinners (for cardiac/stroke/blood clot reasons)**
  - Unless specifically directed by your PCP or cardiologist to restart earlier, can resume aspirin and other blood thinners on post-op day 2
  - For NSAIDS (naproxen, advil, ibuprofen), omega-3/fish oil and other supplements, can resume in 2 weeks
- **Sleeping:**
  - Keep head of bed elevated for 2 weeks to help with swelling. This can be achieved by sleeping on a recliner or with 2 pillows under the head.
  - Avoid rolling onto your face or sleeping on your side

- No sleeping with pets in the bed for 2 weeks
- **Showering:**
  - Avoid showering for the first 24 hours. Then can resume including washing hair and face, but keep eyelid area dry for 1 week.
  - Do not let shower water directly hit eyelids for 2 weeks as the pressure can break open your incisions
- **Driving**
  - Cannot drive for at least 24 hours minimum after receiving IV anesthesia. This is the law.
  - Avoid driving if uncomfortable or vision blurry
- **Activity restrictions**
  - No heavy lifting (>5lbs), bending over or straining, dirty/dusty environments for at least 2 weeks.
  - No jogging/vigorous exercise for 2-3 weeks. It's okay to lightly walk after day 3.
  - No swimming/hot tubbing for 3 weeks
  - No contact or competitive sports for 6 weeks
- **Make-up**
  - No eye make-up for 2 weeks. Always wear sunglasses for UV protection
  - No hair dye/coloring for 4 weeks
- **Contact lenses**
  - Blepharoplasty (excess skin) – avoid for 2 weeks or longer if eyes feel dry
  - Ptosis repair (droopy eyelid) – avoid 2-3 weeks
- **Returning to work**
  - Will vary depending on the job type. Generally, you will be able to return to work approximately 7-10 days following surgery. You may discuss this issue with your physician at the time of your post-op visit.
- **Smoking/alcohol**
  - You should not smoke for at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after surgery. Smoking and chewing tobacco inhibit your circulation and can significantly compromise your surgical outcome
  - No alcohol consumption for 2 weeks
- **Sutures**
  - Will usually be removed at the post-op week 1 visit. For more complex surgeries, will remove at week 2.
  - If you still have significant swelling at 1 week, may leave in for 2 weeks

- Continue antibiotic ointment for another 3 days after suture removal
- **Care beyond post-op visits:**
  - Minor fluctuations in swelling can occur over the next 2-3 months. This is to be expected
  - No direct sunlight exposure on the incisions for at least 6 months. Make sure to wear sunscreen on your face/eyelids every day (even indoors if sitting by a window), at least spf 30 or more. Always wear sunglasses outdoors.
  - Healing is a gradual process and your scars may remain slightly pink and lumpy/bumpy for 6 months or more. Everything will get better with time.
  - Beginning 4 weeks after the surgery, application and gentle massage with Mederma or other silicone scar products may promote softer, less conspicuous scarring.