



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Cosmetic Surgery

General Pre- & Post-Operative Instructions

Thank you for entrusting Dr. Aharonov with your care. This guide brings together everything you need before and after your cosmetic surgery — how to prepare, what to expect each step of the way, and how to care for yourself as you heal. Please read it fully before your surgery day, and keep it nearby during your recovery.

01 BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

Planning Ahead

- If you live outside the immediate Los Angeles area, we can assist you in arranging accommodations as well as your post-operative care needs.
- You may not be alone for the first 24 hours after surgery. Please arrange for someone to pick you up and stay with you through the first night — or let us help you arrange an aftercare facility or private nurse. You will also need a driver for your post-operative visit the next day.
- Fill all of your prescriptions before surgery day, so everything is waiting for you at home.
- Begin taking the vitamins we recommend. The amounts below are suggested; a little more or less is perfectly fine. Continue for 3 to 6 months after surgery:
Alpha Lipoic Acid 600 mg · Vitamin C 1,000 mg · Zinc 50 mg · Biotin 3,000 IU
You may also take Arnica Montana and bromelain starting 2 days before surgery, if you like — both are optional.
- For at least 10 days before surgery, do not take aspirin, ibuprofen, NSAIDs, fish oil, or large doses of vitamin E. Do not resume them after surgery until we tell you it is safe. For pain or aches, take only Tylenol (acetaminophen).
- If you take a GLP-1 medication (such as Ozempic, Wegovy, or Mounjaro) or Adderall, please let us know — these need to be discontinued before surgery.
- If you are under 35 and otherwise healthy, no blood tests are needed. If you are over 35 or have major health concerns, please have blood tests done — with your own doctor or through our office — at least one week before surgery.
- Patients over 45 need a complete history and physical, along with clearance for surgery from their physician.
- No smoking or tobacco, no nicotine products, and no marijuana smoking for at least 4 weeks before surgery — and do not smoke at all while you are healing. Smoking delays healing and raises the risk of complications.
- Avoid alcohol for 7 days before surgery, and keep your salt intake low the week of surgery to minimize swelling.
- Have on hand before surgery: cold compresses or small bags of frozen peas, gauze pads, Q-tips, Tylenol (acetaminophen), a stool softener such as Colace, antibiotic ointment, button-front shirts, and extra pillows or a wedge pillow.

02 YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS

Medications

Take every medication exactly as directed on its label. If you are unsure about anything — including over-the-counter products and supplements — ask us before taking it.

PAIN RELIEF

- Take pain medication with food to avoid nausea, and stay ahead of the pain for the first day or two — it is easier to prevent pain than to chase it.
- Do not exceed 4,000 mg of acetaminophen (Tylenol) in 24 hours, counting all sources combined (many prescription pain medications already contain it).
- Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication, and wait at least 24 hours after your last dose before driving.

PREVENTING COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Start a stool softener (such as Colace) when you begin pain medication — constipation is very common after anesthesia and narcotics. Do not wait until you are constipated.
- Take anti-nausea medication at the first queasy feeling; sip clear fluids until it passes.

ANTIBIOTICS

- Start taking your antibiotics as directed and finish the entire course, even if you feel fine.

03 THE DAY BEFORE

The Day Before Surgery

- Confirm the time of your surgery with our office.
- Do not drink any alcohol, and avoid excess salt.
- Do not eat or drink anything during the 8 hours before your surgery, unless otherwise instructed.
- If we provided a Hibiclens rinse, plan to use it as directed in the morning.

04 SURGERY DAY

The Morning of Surgery

- Shower and wash your hair — with the Hibiclens rinse if you were given one. Towel-dry your hair afterward.
- Do not put any other products in your hair or on your face, and do not wear any makeup — including moisturizer. Remove all jewelry, including any removable piercings.
- Wear something comfortable that will not be tight around your head; a button-up shirt works best.
- If you wear contact lenses, bring glasses or a lens case so you can remove them before surgery.
- Bring your prescription medications with you.
- Please arrive on time to the surgery center — arriving on time is important. The nurse and anesthesiologist will prepare you for surgery.
- If we arranged a caretaker for you, please coordinate your pickup time with the caretaker from the surgery center.

05 RECOVERY BEGINS

The Evening After Surgery

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Grogginess, nausea, or chills from anesthesia are normal and wear off within hours.
- Dr. Aharonov will call you in the evening to check on you.
- You may have a dressing, small drains, or fine temporary sutures on the skin — these are used selectively depending on your procedure. We will tell you exactly what was used and when it comes out.

HOW TO REST

- Keep your head elevated — on two or three pillows or in a recliner — for the first few days, unless we tell you otherwise.
- Ice 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off while you are awake for the first 48 hours, with a clean cloth between the ice and your skin. Never apply ice directly to bare skin.
- Eat lightly — soft foods are easiest — and drink plenty of fluids. Go easy on salt.
- Get up and walk around briefly this evening; gentle movement reduces swelling and lowers the risk of blood clots.
- Do not be alone overnight. Your caretaker should stay with you through the first night.

06 THE FIRST WEEK

The First Week

- We will see you the day after surgery. If you have a dressing, it will be removed — along with any drains, if they were placed.
- Apply antibiotic ointment to your incisions as directed, keeping them moist at all times until your sutures are removed.
- Continue icing on and off through the first 48 hours after surgery.
- You may shower and wash your hair the day after surgery, unless we tell you otherwise. Do not soak — no baths, hot tubs, pools, or saunas — until your incisions are fully healed (usually 2 to 3 weeks).
- Sleep on your back with your head elevated; avoid pressure on the operated areas.
- Do not bend at the waist, lift anything heavy, or strain (including on the toilet) for 1 to 2 weeks.
- Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medication, and only once you can turn your head comfortably and react normally.

07 YOUR RECOVERY

What to Expect

Every patient heals on their own timeline, but the pattern below is normal. Healing is not linear — you will have good days and slower days.

- Swelling and bruising are typically worst at 2 to 3 days, then steadily improve. Bruises shift from purple to yellow-green over 2 to 3 weeks.
- One side may look worse than the other at first — this is normal and evens out.
- Numbness, tingling, tightness, and itching around the operated areas are normal and can come and go for weeks or months as nerves recover.
- Feeling tired or emotional during the first week is common — anesthesia, disrupted sleep, and the stress of surgery all play a role. Rest as much as you need.
- Scars typically look pink and may feel firm or raised for several months before softening and fading. A scar's final quality takes about a year to declare itself.

08 GETTING MOVING AGAIN

Activity & Exercise

- Walking from day one is encouraged — short, easy walks reduce swelling and prevent stiffness. Avoid anything strenuous.
- Ease back into light exercise at about 2 weeks; expect swelling to temporarily worsen after activity at first.
- Avoid strenuous exercise, heavy lifting, and bending with your head below your heart until we clear you — usually 4 to 6 weeks for full activity.
- Avoid sexual activity for about 2 weeks, or until you are comfortable.
- Most desk-work patients return within a week, though visible swelling and bruising may linger. Plan accordingly if your work is public-facing.

09 PROTECTING YOUR RESULT

Scar & Sun Care

- Keep incisions moist with ointment until your sutures are removed, and keep them clean — gently wash daily once we clear you to do so.
- After your sutures are removed, begin applying Rare Reagent Skin Recovery Complex to your incisions twice daily, or as directed. It is intended to quicken scar healing and reduce redness.
- Once incisions are fully healed, protect them from the sun with SPF 30 or higher every day. Sunburn on a healing scar can permanently discolor it.
- Use a cool dryer setting near operated areas — numb skin burns easily.
- Wait at least 4 weeks before coloring your hair.
- You may wear makeup once your sutures are out and there is no crusting — never on open or oozing incisions.

10 WARNING SIGNS

Contact us immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Fever over 101°F.
- Redness that is spreading outward from an incision.
- Pus-like or foul-smelling drainage.
- Bleeding that soaks through dressings.
- Sudden swelling on one side of the face.
- Severe pain that is not relieved by your medication.
- Any change in your vision.

Call our office immediately at 310.276.1126 — day or night. If you have chest pain, trouble breathing, or signs of a stroke, call 911 first.

11 STAYING IN TOUCH

Follow-Up Appointments

Please be sure to keep all of your follow-up appointments — they are how we make sure you are healing exactly as expected. If you live out of town, follow-ups can be done virtually.

- Your first post-operative visit is the day after surgery.
- Sutures are typically removed about 6 days after surgery by Dr. Aharonov.
- After that, we usually see you at 2 weeks, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year — we will confirm your exact schedule with you.
- Additional appointments can be scheduled any time, as you desire or need.

We are committed to supporting you at every stage of your recovery — please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.