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Eyelid surgery – Postoperative Instructions

Thank you for trusting Careaga Plastic Surgery with your eyelid surgery. These guidelines will help you recover safely and achieve the best possible results. Please review them carefully and contact our office with any questions or concerns.

Medications You Must Take

- Erythromycin ophthalmic ointment: Start the night after surgery. Apply to the eyelid incisions 3 times daily for 2 weeks. Use a small amount; the tube is intentionally small.
- If prescribed – Tobradex (antibiotic drops): One drop in each eye, 3 times daily for 7 days.

Medications You Can Take if Needed

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) – for mild to moderate pain.
- Tylenol #3 with codeine – for stronger pain, every 6 hours as needed. Take with a stool softener to prevent constipation. If pain is controlled, it's best to use Tylenol only. **IF YOU ARE TAKING TYLENOL #3, you can only take up to 500mg of acetaminophen every 6 hours**
- Ondansetron (Zofran) – for nausea, every 6 hours as needed.

The Night of Your Surgery

- Apply cold compresses to the eyes for the first 48 hours. You may use cold saline or bottled water placed in a bowl with ice. Apply for 15–20 minutes on and off throughout the day.
- Sleep with your head elevated at 30–45° using pillows or a recliner.
- Mild sore throat is normal from anesthesia; you may use Chloraseptic spray.
- Eat a soft, low-sodium diet (soups, shakes, yogurt, liquids).
- Take your first antibiotic dose that night after eating.

The Morning After Surgery and the First Week

- Continue sleeping with your head elevated for at least 1 week.
- Apply erythromycin ophthalmic ointment 3 times daily to the incision lines.
- You may shower from the neck down the following morning.
- Mild bruising, swelling, and tearing are normal and will improve gradually.
- Avoid rubbing or applying pressure to the eyes.



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Showering and Wound Care

- You may wash your hair on day 3 after surgery, ideally with help.
- After showering, reapply erythromycin ointment to the incision lines.
- Do not submerge your face in water, pools, or the ocean for 4 weeks.
- Keep incisions clean and lightly moisturized.

Activity Guidelines

- Avoid smoking or vaping – they delay healing.
- Weeks 1–3: No lifting heavier than 10 lb (4.5 kg).
- Week 4: Light exercise is permitted (avoid straining or heavy weights).
- Week 6: You may return to your normal exercise routine, including swimming.

Scar and Skin Care

- Continue erythromycin ointment for the first 2 weeks post-op.
- At 2 weeks, begin using a silicone-based scar cream (available in office or local pharmacy). Apply as directed, avoiding contact with the eyes. Continue for several months for best results.
- Sun protection: Begin daily sunscreen (SPF 50) after 2 weeks. Wear wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses when outdoors. Avoid direct sun exposure to the eyelids for 3 months.

Follow-Up Visits

- 1–2 days after surgery: first check.
- 1 week: suture removal and evaluation.
- Subsequent visits: at 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months.

When to Call the Office

- Sudden swelling or pain on one side.
- Excessive bleeding or discharge.
- Fever over 101°F (38.3°C).
- Vision changes, double vision, or eye pain.
- Shortness of breath or chest pain.

If urgent symptoms occur after hours, go to the nearest emergency room.