

Fat Injection: Instructions After Your Procedure

What supplies do I need to buy before the procedure?

- Antibacterial soap
- Vaseline
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Ice packs:
 - You may make some at home, please see the handout “How do I make an Ice Pack?” or visit <http://careguides.med.umich.edu> and search “How do I Make an Ice Pack?”
 - If you purchase them, buy the gel variety and make sure they are lightweight)

What is facial fat transfer?

Facial lipo-injection is a procedure that sculpts and restores the face to its natural beauty. Age and exercise can produce fat atrophy (loss) in the face resulting in a sunken, drawn appearance. Facial fat transfer recreates the natural, healthy appearance of a youthful face by restoring volume to it. The fat is removed from the donor site (usually the belly, thighs or hips) with a small needle and processed to remove excess fluids and damaged fat cells. These fat cells are then injected using a smaller needle just under the wrinkle or deep within the muscle (in some areas) to restore facial volume.

What do I need to do the day of the procedure?

- Wash your face with antibacterial soap.
- Do not apply make-up or facial lotion.
- Make certain to eat a light breakfast the morning of the procedure. If possible, avoid heavily caffeinated beverages. If you are having your procedure in the operating room, stop eating the night before your procedure at 12am (midnight).

- Avoid clothes that need to be pulled over your head, this will prevent grafts from becoming dislodged.
- Do not wear any jewelry.
- Plan to have transportation to and from the procedure. Do not drive yourself.

What are my post-procedure instructions?

General guidelines:

- Have someone drive you home after your procedure.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Follow a balanced diet.
- Exercising less may lead to constipation, so you may want to add raw fruit to your diet, and drink more fluids.
- Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin, unless approved by your surgeon.
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.
- Even when not taking pain medications, avoid alcohol for 3 weeks after surgery as it causes fluid to build-up in your body.
- If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these supplements as tolerated.
- If you smoke, you should consider stopping. Smoking can significantly decrease the chances of survival of the transferred fat cells.
- Limit salt in your diet (if possible) in order to reduce facial swelling.
- During your rest and recovery at home, you should avoid the temptation to do a lot of household busywork like cleaning and gardening that involves bending over and straining, this can lead to noticeable and prolonged swelling.
- You can apply makeup to the face the day after surgery if needed as long as there are no stitches in the area.

What should my activity level be?

- Start walking as soon as possible. This helps reduce swelling, lowers the chance of blood clots or pneumonia and lowers the risk of constipation.
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking any prescribed pain medications (narcotics/opioids).
- You can return to work in 1 day. You may return to work immediately but you may be very swollen and bruised.
- Avoid the following for **2 week** after surgery:
 - Avoid straining that can lead to an increase in facial swelling.
 - Lifting heavy objects (over 10 pounds)
 - Bending at the waist
 - Any physical exercise that can cause overheating. If you are used to frequent workouts and would like to resume your fitness regimen early, then you may start lighter exercise after the first few days of rest unless otherwise specified by your surgeon. If you notice significant facial swelling after your workout, reduce the amount of exercise you are doing. Light exercise is allowed, decrease the weights you use by half to one third of your normal amount and use slow muscle movements.
- Avoid swimming, saunas and steam rooms for **14 days**

How do I reduce swelling?

- Use ice packs liberally in the areas of the face where fat was transplanted for the first 3 days after surgery. This minimizes swelling. If you have any discomfort in the body area where fat was harvested, you can use ice packs for the first couple of days. You can continue to use ice over the swollen areas after surgery as needed for comfort and swelling.
- For the first 2 nights, sleep in a semi-upright recliner, like a La-Z-Boy, if you have one. If not, sleep with an additional pillow under your head to help reduce the swelling more quickly. Sleep with your head elevated in this fashion for the entire first week after surgery if it does not interfere with the restfulness of your sleep.

- You may have a few single stitches on your face. These will dissolve over the next 2-3 weeks. Cleanse the sutures with ½ peroxide and ½ water and the apply Vaseline twice a day for 6 days.

What should I expect the area to look like as it heals?

You will notice that your face will look more swollen either 2 or 3 days after surgery, which is expected and should not raise any alarm or concern. The swelling should continue to decrease after the first several days. You may have bruising, swelling, firmness and mild discomfort in both the face and the part of the body from where the fat was harvested. This is normal and will gradually resolve over a period of a few days to weeks. You may also notice some pressure and tightness in your face after surgery. This is normal and should resolve over 1- 2 weeks.

One side of the face may be more swollen or lumpy than the other side. This is normal. Swelling resolves unevenly, so you may notice these imperfections for several weeks after surgery. This does not mean that your fat is going away, but typically a little swelling can persist even up to 6 months after surgery. You may notice ongoing changes for up to a year after surgery.

What follow-up care will I receive?

You will be scheduled for a follow up appointment in approximately 1 week after surgery.

When should I call my doctor?

Call you doctor if you notice any of the symptoms below:

- Worsening swelling and redness that persist after a few days.
- Increased redness
- Severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- Any side effects to medications including;
 - Rash
 - Nausea

- Headache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Oral temperature over 101 degrees.
- Yellowish or greenish liquid from the incisions or a foul odor.
- Loss of feeling or motion.

In the event of life-threatening bleeding, call 911 or go to the emergency department.

What is the contact information?

- Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm:
 - Call: (734) 432-7634 option # 1
- After hours and on weekends:
 - Call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the ENT Doctor on call.

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Author: Lily Wu RN and Shannon Rudy MD
Plain language editing: Karelyn Munro, BA

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