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FACIAL SCARS

Experts Say These Tips Make a Huge Difference in Post-Surgery Facial Scarring

Healing helpers.

By Liz Ritter, Executive Editor · Sep 15, 2021



You most likely didn't make the decision to get an aesthetic facial procedure lightly—so why would you make the after care an afterthought? “Proper wound care is one of the most crucial steps patients can take to minimize any risk of post-surgery scarring,” stresses Wayne, NJ facial plastic surgeon Jeffrey B. Wise, MD. “The incisions need to be kept clean to avoid any potential infections and complications, and scar gel should be applied consistently to help with the healing. This also involves avoiding intense sun exposure, which can elongate healing time. In a nutshell, it's best to follow the incision care prescribed by your plastic surgeon, as they know best what your specific recovery would take.” Here's what else the experts say are smart moves to make during recovery:

Listen, Listen, Listen

As Scottsdale, AZ facial plastic surgeon Kelly V. Bomer, MD succinctly sums up: “You want to protect your financial and emotional investment by taking care of yourself. That includes following the surgeon’s instructions post-surgery.”

Take It Easy

The healing process that comes with a surgical aesthetic procedure isn’t instantaneous. “It can take two months for the incisions and deep sutures to become strong,” says Dr. Bomer, adding that that is why it’s vital not to strain anything. “If there is too much strain on the body’s system or the operated area early on [i.e., in the first two months], the surgical result can be compromised.”

Relax Prior

Campbell, CA dermatologist Amelia K. Hausauer, MD says neuromodulators, such as Botox Cosmetic, Dysport, Xeomin or Jeuveau, can be done one-to-two weeks prior to surgery in the region where cuts will be made. “This relaxes the muscles so that you have a thinner fine-line scar.”

Keep It Clean

Sounds simple enough, but Davie, FL dermatologist Marianna Blyumin-Karasik, MD says keeping the scar clean, staying out of the sun, using a gentle cleanser daily, and avoiding any picking or scratching is seriously key. Fort Lauderdale, FL dermatologist Dr. Matthew Elias also gives the go for a gentle cleanser and adds that he likes topical silicon products—preferably ones with SPF. “You want to avoid direct sun exposure to the wound and apply proper sunscreen if the scar is exposed,” advises New York dermatologist **Jody A. Levine, MD**. “And apply ointment to the scar frequently to keep the wound moist and reduce scabbing.”

...And Moist

Besides focusing on keeping incisions clean, Palo Alto, CA facial plastic surgeon Sam P. Most says the magical word is moist. “I recommend applying a petroleum-based ointment for the first three weeks.”

Be Gentle

This one doesn’t just go for your cleanser selection, as Saddle Brook, NJ dermatologist Dr. Fredric Haberman says he’s often asked how safe it is to shower after a facial surgery: “It’s typically OK to allow clean shower water to wash over the wound, as long as you don’t scrub it,” he advises. “In general, it’s good to be gentle.”

Take Up Massage

Dr. Haberman and Dr. Levine also recommend massaging the wound (again, the key word here is gently) to increase blood flow. “Sutures are usually removed between five and eight days,” Dr. Haberman says. “After the sutures have been removed, you can gently massage the skin around the wound twice daily for the first two weeks, and then once a day for a month. [He prefers a moisturizing lotion with vitamin E or aloe.] This will increase the blood flow in the area and prevent scar tissue build-up.”