

Surgical Instruction Packet

Facial Surgery



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For any life-threatening emergencies please call 9-1-1



Congratulations on your upcoming surgery!

Contained within this packet is all the information you need to be well-prepared for your operation. To make things easy to understand, we have divided the information into three sections: Preop, Postop, and Forms. *Please note that depending on your surgeon, there may be some differences in your care instructions – it is important that you communicate with your surgical team.*

Please be sure to scroll through each page of this document in order to get an idea of its contents and fill in each required field. *Note that you must sign the required forms in order to proceed with your surgery.*

Thank you, and as always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Your Align Surgical Team

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Forms (Required)

The following forms must be completed via DocuSign in order to proceed with Surgery. If you have not received the required forms, please contact the office immediately.

- ☐ Updated Health Information
- ☐ Preview of Surgery Informed Consent
- ☐ Preview of COVID-19 Informed Consent
- ☐ Mental Health Consent Form
- ☐ Post-Operative Housing and Care Form
- ☐ Photograph Release and Consent Form

Preoperative Instructions & Timeline

Preoperative Timeline

4 weeks before surgery

- Obtain medical clearance letter(s) (only if instructed)
- Obtain required Labs (only if instructed)



1-2 weeks before surgery

- Preoperative Visit (usually over phone or video call)
- Prescriptions will be sent in



A few days before surgery

- Fill Prescriptions (obtained at Preoperative Visit)



Night before surgery

- Nothing to eat past midnight
- Place scopolamine patch behind ear (*wash your hands after*)



Morning of surgery

- Take Gabapentin, Celebrex, +/- Emend with a sip of water



Surgery

Medications

Your prescriptions are sent to your pharmacy after your preoperative appointment. Pick up your prescriptions **BEFORE** your operation.

- Some medications may be different depending on your needs and medical history.
- ***If there is a rash with ANY medication, stop taking the medication.***

The **NIGHT BEFORE** Surgery:

Scopolamine patch (for nausea)

- Place behind your ear **the night before the operation**
- ***Do not rub your eyes, and wash your hands after touching the patch***
- Take it off the day after surgery - otherwise may cause dizziness or double vision

The **MORNING** of Surgery:

Emend (for nausea)

Celebrex and Gabapentin (for pain)

- **AFTER speaking with your surgeon in the Preop Bay the morning of your surgery,** take these with a small sip of water

AFTER Surgery:

Pain Medications

- NSAID (such as Toradol, Ibuprofen)
- Neuromodulator (such as Gabapentin)
- Narcotics (such as Percocet, Oxycodone)

Out of an overabundance of caution, you are prescribed Narcan, which is an antidote for narcotic overdose that your caregiver may use. It is VERY unlikely that you will need narcan. Narcotics, used appropriately, are safe. Overdose presents with slow breathing, confusion, and loss of consciousness.

Pain after surgery is normal.

- Expect pain level to be 3-4 out of 10, not 0.
- You may taper off pain meds at any time.
- Itching from narcotic pain medication is NORMAL. Benadryl can help.

Other medications we may prescribe:

- Stool softener
- Antibiotics (such as Keflex, Augmentin)
- Anti-nausea medication (such as Zofran)
- Anti-anxiety medication (such as Ativan)
- Steroids for facial swelling
- Arnika can help reduce swelling / bruising after surgery. It is optional, and available for purchase at any pharmacy or online (amazon.com). Start 2 days prior to the operation and take for 1-2 weeks.



REFILLS: Call M-F DURING BUSINESS HOURS. If you are running low, please plan ahead. No refills can be processed over the weekend.

DISCUSS blood thinners like **Aspirin, Warfarin, or Plavix** with your surgeon.

Things to **STOP BEFORE SURGERY**

- **STOP Supplements** such as Ginseng, Turmeric, Ginkgo Biloba, St. John's Wort (do not stop suddenly), Fish Oil, and Vitamin E. DO NOT start anything new (aside from Arnika).
- **STOP SMOKING CIGARETTES (all tobacco products)** at least **1 month before and 1 month after surgery (preferably PERMANENTLY)**. Nicotine causes poor wound healing, infection, scarring, and anesthesia complications.
- **STOP ALCOHOL** at least **1 month before and 1 month after surgery**. Alcohol thins the blood and increases the risk for bleeding.
- **STOP SMOKING MARIJUANA 1 month before and 1 month after surgery** surgery. Marijuana can interfere with general anesthesia. Edibles are generally ok after surgery. DO NOT take any marijuana the morning of surgery, this can affect your heart.
- **STOP SUDAFED** and Pseudoephedrine-containing decongestants 3 days before surgery.
- **STOP ASPIRIN** and aspirin-containing products, for example, Aspirin/Alka-Seltzer/Excedrin. Talk to your surgeon if you are taking aspirin for your heart.
- **STOP OZEMPIC/WEGOVY (any semaglutide) diabetes/weight loss medication 2 weeks before surgery**. These medications increase your risk of vomiting while unconscious.
- **STOP ACCUTANE (isotretinoin) 6 months before surgery**, it will cause poor/thick scarring
- **You may need to STOP all immunomodulator biologics (examples: humira/remicade)** Talk to your surgeon about *when* to stop and restart them, since they will affect healing.

SURGERY WILL BE CANCELED if you fail to stop the use of nicotine products, marijuana, and alcohol! If you are smoker, nicotine levels will be tested preoperatively.

These instructions are subject to modification based on your medical history and your surgeon's/clinician's assessment.

HORMONES

CONTINUE ALL Hormone Therapy, unless otherwise directed by your surgeon.

- SPIRONOLACTONE – DO NOT take on the day of surgery.
- Bring all your hormones with you, in case the hospital does not carry them.
- Two months after surgery, follow up with your provider to check hormone levels.
- DO NOT STOP thyroid medication.

Post-Operative Care & What to Expect

We customize your surgery to match your personal embodiment goals, so your surgical plan may not include all listed procedures. Find recovery instructions for each specific procedure below.

Swelling

- Swelling, bruising, and drainage are **normal** after all surgeries.
- You may have head dressings, tape, and drains. **Do not touch them.** We will remove them.
- **Eat a low sodium diet** to reduce facial swelling.
- Swelling, numbness, and tingling in the scalp and face after surgery is normal and can take 6 weeks to 6 months to resolve. In some cases, it may take up to a year.
- Expect the **most swelling on day 2** after surgery, which will mostly resolve in 2 weeks.
- You will see about 80% of the results at 3 months, but **final results won't be visible until 1 year after surgery.**

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy may help with a smoother recovery after surgery, by encouraging faster healing, decreasing swelling, and improving tissue graft survival. Though it is not mandatory, it is highly recommended. We will help you get set up with a center.

Hairline Advancement/Brow Lift/Browbone/Cranioplasty

For hairline advancement, brow lift, and browbone or cranioplasty, these procedures are typically performed together. You may have a temporary drain, and after the dressings are removed, apply antibiotic or petroleum ointment to the incision three times per day. If there is any drainage, lightly apply a gauze roll. Sutures and staples will be removed around 10-14 days after surgery. You may experience temporary hair loss, called "shock loss," which is normal and resolves in three months.

Rhinoplasty

Rhinoplasty can be uncomfortable for most patients. Your nose will be protected with tape and/or a metal splint, and sometimes silicone "Doyle splints" inside your nose. These will be removed about a week after surgery. You will have an incision under your nose, which should be treated with antibiotic ointment or Vaseline 3 times a day. Expect a stuffy nose and use saline nasal spray every few hours. Bleeding is rare, but if it occurs, apply direct pressure and use Afrin nasal spray 3 times a day for 3 days. If the bleeding persists, contact your surgeon.

Chin & Jawline/Genioplasty/Mandible Contouring

To care for incisions after Chin & Jawline/Genioplasty/Mandible Contouring surgery, avoid looking at the incisions to prevent bleeding. Ice the jaw for a couple of days to reduce swelling and eat only soft foods for 1-2 weeks. Brush your top teeth gently and gargle with antiseptic mouthwash (peridex) 3 times a day for a week to maintain hygiene. All sutures will dissolve in several weeks.

Fat Transfer

After fat transfer, expect swelling and bruising in the areas where fat was placed, such as lips, cheeks, and temples. Over placement of fat is intentional as 30-50% of the fat may be absorbed and disappear in 6 months. Avoid applying direct pressure to these areas.

Thyroid Cartilage Reduction ("Tracheal Shave")/Tracheal Augmentation

After thyroid cartilage reduction ("tracheal shave") or tracheal augmentation, you will have a small horizontal incision under your chin. If this is your only surgery, you can shower in 2 days. Steristrips will come off on their own in about 7 days. In most patients, pain and swelling are minimal. Temporary voice changes may occur but usually resolve after 10-14 days.

Additional Information

Activity

- **Take it easy**, especially in the first 2 weeks.
- **Keep your head elevated** for 2 weeks after the operation. You can use pillows or a soft wedge behind your head, or sleep in a recliner.
- **Avoid bending over** or doing anything that increases your heart rate or blood pressure.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 20 lbs. for 2 weeks.
- Light walking is ok immediately after surgery. Exercising and strenuous activities are ok at 4 weeks.
- You may want to take 2 weeks off from work, depending on your job. Most patients feel comfortable returning to work and public view by 3 weeks.

Grooming/Hygiene

- You may use a gentle cleanser on the towel to **gently** wipe/wash your face.
- **Shaving with an electric shaver is ok**, just be careful about going across any incisions.
- *Do not use a razor*, since your skin may be numb and you may cut yourself
- Brush your teeth gently, just the upper teeth for the first week

Wound Care

- Shower only after speaking with your surgeon and dressings have been removed. Use regular soap and water, and be gentle and quick. Avoid long showers.
- **Apply petroleum-based ointment to all incisions** 3 times a day for 3-4 weeks. Avoid neomycin due to potential allergic reactions.
- Avoid curling irons, tight braids, wigs, hair products, and aggressive skin care for 6 weeks.
- **Avoid the sun**, wear UPF hat, and use sunblock. Silicone-based scar cream can be applied to incisions 3 times a day, 2-4 weeks after surgery.
- Wounds take 9 months to a year to fully mature. Unsightly scarring can be addressed early.

Medications

- Pain medications include NSAIDs (like Toradol/Ibuprofen), Tylenol, Gabapentin, and opioids like oxycodone/hydrocodone.
- Antibiotics for 7 days, and antiseptic mouthwash (Peridex) for oral incisions.
- Narcotic pain medication can cause constipation; use MiraLAX or Colace as directed. Drink plenty of fluids to prevent constipation.
- Narcotic medication can cause nausea. Anti-nausea medication or ginger ale/tea can help.
- Itching is normal; take over-the-counter Benadryl if no rash is present. Alternatively, switch to extra-strength Tylenol. If a rash is present, discontinue the medication and take Benadryl as directed. Claritin or Allegra can also be used.
- Medications and post-op instructions will be reviewed in detail before discharge. If issues arise, call the surgeon.

CONTACT THE OFFICE IF YOU EXPERIENCE:

- *Increased swelling, bruising, redness, or pain not relieved by medication.*
- *Rash, nausea, headache, vomiting, or temperature over 101 degrees.*
- *Yellow/green/foul-smelling drainage from the incisions or bleeding not controlled with gentle pressure.*

Medications and all post-op instructions will be reviewed with you in detail prior to sending you home. **If you have any issues, at any time, do not hesitate to call us!**

Guide to Post-Operative Scar Care

Use paper tape or silicone-based scar treatments for your surgical incisions. Silicone has been shown to improve the appearance of scar over time.

- Topical silicone is available over the counter in gel or sheet/tape form. Use whichever is more suitable for your incisions. Some recommended brands are:



example: amazon.com

example: embracescarterapy.com

- Your incisions may be covered with surgical glue or tape after surgery, which will soften and peel off after about 3 weeks.
- Start using silicone tape or gel where the glue or tape has fallen off, and the incisions are fully sealed. If any scabs or raw areas remain, hold off on using topical silicone until they're closed.
 - o **If using the gel**, apply a very thin layer over the scar twice a day, letting it dry for 1-2 mins each time.
 - o **If using the sheet/tape**, keep it on as close to 24 hours a day as possible, removing it only for showers. You can reuse the same sheet until it's no longer sticky. Washing it with soap and water can make it sticky again.
- Use silicone (gel or sheet) for a full 12 months to make scars fade as much as possible.

Avoid direct sun exposure, use sunblock, and cover your scars for 12 months to prevent darkening.

Understanding Risks

Information for Patients Seeking Gender Affirming Surgery - Understanding the Risk of Regret

The team at Align Surgical Associates is dedicated to providing high-quality gender-affirming surgical care. We are committed to affirming your gender identity and offering surgical services to support your embodiment goals. As part of the informed consent process, this document aims to provide you with essential information regarding the rare, but serious, possibility of experiencing regret following medical or surgical interventions in gender-affirming care.

Understanding Regret

While instances of regret are rare, it is important to acknowledge that some individuals may come to regret their decision to undergo hormonal or surgical intervention. Gender-affirming care is deeply personal, and one's understanding of their gender identity may evolve over time. Since we cater to patients at various stages in their lives, we have observed that multiple factors can contribute to feelings of regret in relation to gender-affirming care.

Factors Contributing to Regret

Here are some reasons one might experience regret after undergoing gender-affirming interventions:

- Challenges arising from changes in social relationships (e.g., family, romantic, friendships, work)
- Shifts in life goals (e.g., desire for biological children)
- Changes in sexual orientation or preferences
- Complications related to surgery, medication, or endocrine treatment
- Dissatisfaction with surgical outcomes
- Religious or spiritual conflicts or losses
- Development of a gender-fluid or nonbinary identity
- Changes in societal understanding and acceptance of gender identity and expression
- Recognition that factors other than gender incongruence may have influenced the decision to transition

Permanent Changes and Informed Decisions

Many interventions involved in gender-affirming care can result in permanent changes. Halting or altering hormonal therapy, or undergoing additional surgeries, may not necessarily reverse changes that have already occurred, and could carry additional risks. Therefore, it is crucial that your decision to undergo surgery is based on a thorough understanding of the benefits, risks, and realistic expectations. We encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns with your healthcare team, which should include a mental health professional. Ideally, factors that could contribute to regret should be carefully considered and understood, enabling you to make the most informed and enduring decision regarding your gender-affirming care.

Addressing Regret

Even with diligent efforts to make the best decision, it is possible to experience regret. While feelings of regret are typically temporary, in rare cases they may persist. We understand the sensitivity of this topic. If you are grappling with these emotions or are concerned that you might in the future, involve your mental health provider and let your surgical team know. Our team is available to support you in navigating these emotions and in determining the best course of action. If you choose to proceed with surgery and later experience feelings of regret, do not hesitate to reach out to us and your mental health provider. We are here to support you as an individual and assist you in achieving your goals.



Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to review these documents and for trusting us with your care. Your Surgery Pre-Surgical Instruction Packet is now complete.

Sincerely,
Your Align Surgical Team



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