Carlos K. Wesley, M.D.

FUE Post-Operative Instructions

Date/Time of Bandage Removal: _____

Post-Operative Check in person or virtual (Optional): _____

Emergency phone number:
(732)-485-4973 Text or Call

****To avoid displacing the grafts, please do not attempt to put your bandage back on if (for any reason) it falls off. Please sleep on your back.*

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MANAGING DISCOMFORT & NAUSEA

After your surgery, before you leave the office, your nurse will have given you an envelope containing your post-operative instructions, an appointment for the next day bandage removal, a roll of gauze, and small envelopes containing your medications. **The numbered envelopes** are your medications for any discomfort or pain.

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- Pain Medication **Tylenol #3** with Codeine
- Envelope containing **Ambien,** for sleep, if needed (1/2 to 1 tablet).
- Envelope containing **Prednisone** (anti-swelling pills).
- Envelope containing **Baclofen** (for hiccups).

Take **Pain Medication,** as directed on the envelope if you experience any discomfort. Even if you experience no pain prior to bedtime, we recommend you take a **Pain Medication** for overnight comfort.

Patients should not drive a car while taking any of the medications listed above. Your reflexes will be impaired, and driving could be dangerous. For any mild discomfort you may have after the first few days, you may also want to purchase some over the counter **extra-strength Tylenol**.

NOURISHMENT

After your surgery when you leave our office, it is very important that you have a good meal (dinner), low sodium, and drink plenty of fluids, especially water, during the course of the evening. Please no alcohol during the time that you are taking the narcotic.

THE HEAD BANDAGE

Please do not attempt to lift or check under your bandage. It is important that the bandage maintains firm, even pressure on the donor and recipient areas and not shift overnight. You will have been given a long piece of gauze. Before you go to sleep for the evening, please wrap it over the top of the bandage and tie it underneath your chin to hold it in place and to keep it from shifting. If the bandage falls off, this is okay; please do not attempt to put it back on. You may continue sleeping in a more elevated position.

SHOULD BLEEDING OCCUR

Significant bleeding **rarely** occurs after surgery. If bleeding should occur after regular office hours: Apply firm, steady pressure over the bleeding area for 10-15 minutes **without** lifting the bandage. If the blood spot on the bandage continues to increase in size, call the phone number listed on the front cover of this pamphlet. **Please do not take any fish oil, aspirin, ibuprofen, or any medicine containing aspirin.** The nurse will inform you when these medications and supplements can be resumed. **Please do not** drink any alcohol while on medication.

BANDAGE REMOVAL DAY

PLEASE EAT A GOOD BREAKFAST BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT. Due to our scheduled surgeries each morning, we ask that you please be on time. Baseball caps are provided for all patients on bandage removal day. Female patients may prefer to bring a scarf to wear after the bandage is removed.

We suggest you take **1 Tylenol 3 with Codeine** for your comfort **one hour before your scheduled appointment time**. *If you are driving, please take **two over the counter extra–strength Tylenol instead.***

You will also begin your post-operative **Prednisone** with breakfast on this day—unless contraindicated. It's important that you do not exert yourself for the first few hours following bandage removal. Exertion can cause bleeding.

We will give you some gauze to take with you following bandage removal. Occasionally, there is a small amount of bleeding from the recipient or donor areas, and you can use the gauze to apply firm pressure with the pads of your fingertips to the bleeding area for 5-10 minutes. Call the office if the bleeding continues.

MINIMIZING SWELLING

Most patients will experience some degree of forehead or facial swelling after hair transplant surgery. To help prevent swelling and bruising, it will be very useful if you follow the instructions below:

You will be given a reusable ice pack on bandage-removal day. Apply ice packs to your forehead, temple, and eye areas as well as the nape of your neck. **DO NOT PLACE COLD PACKS DIRECTLY ON THE GRAFTS**. We recommend using the packs 10 minutes on and 20 minutes off, as much as possible, for the first few days after your surgery.

Try sleeping with your head at a 45° angle by using a few pillows, or sleeping on a reclining chair for one to five nights following your surgery. This will help to minimize the swelling. Another option is to ***sleep flat with no pillows except to support your neck (not head)***. Any swelling that develops will be pulled by gravity away from your forehead and face.

Note: If swelling should occur, we are sorry if this inconveniences you. Unfortunately, if you call the office, there is no further treatment or medication available. Nature must take its course. The swelling will gradually subside over a three- to seven-day period.

The following are recommended by many cosmetic surgeons to promote healing, minimize bruising and swelling. The evidence to support this is mostly anecdotal and thus we recommend it as an **optional addition** to the regular post-operative instructions.

- **Arnica Montana (30c) pellets: Immediately post-operatively:** place 5 pellets under your tongue every hour until bedtime. For the rest of the first week post-operatively, place 5 pellets under your tongue three times daily.

- **Arnica Gel:** Apply gel to any bruised or swollen areas, twice daily for two weeks post-operatively. **Do not put on any grafted or sutured areas and avoid contact with eyes.**

SHAMPOOING

On the 2nd day **AFTER** your surgery, you should wash your hair **TWICE** daily, in the following manner:

- Fill the bathtub with warm water; lie back in the water until the water covers the donor and recipient areas. Only your face will be exposed. We recommend using earplugs to prevent ear infections. Epsom salts are recommended to add to the bathwater to aid in healing.
- Soak the donor area for 10 minutes and then come to a sitting position and start massaging the donor area with shampoo (no medicated or dandruff shampoo), with as much pressure as you can tolerate, using the pads of your fingertips.
- While massaging the shampoo to the donor area, you will also add the shampoo suds to the recipient area by very gently patting the suds onto this area.
- Use a cup and with clean, warm tap water, rinse off the shampoo. Continue washing your hair in this way for the first 10 days – twice daily, am & pm
- Gently pat dry your recipient area with a clean paper towel or blow dry it on a "cool" setting. Continue applying the ATP every hour until the bottle is finished.
- Next, apply the water-based **(Aquagel)** to the recipient area and the **Bacitracin** on the donor area.
- To avoid disturbing your grafts, it is best to simply use your fingertips to style your hair. If you must use an instrument, only a comb may be used staying 1 cm above the scalp. After 10 days, you may wash your hair **daily** in the shower until all the crusts have fallen off.

EXERCISE

We recommend that you **do not exercise for one week;** however, you may engage in very light walking or low-exertion activities. If you do begin exercising after 7 days or otherwise engage in activities that cause you to perspire, please wash your hair as soon as possible after the activity. This is to prevent infection. Maximum weightlifting or any kind of heavy lifting must be avoided for 14 days following surgery. You may swim in the ocean, a clean lake, or a clean private pool beginning the day after surgery. Wait two weeks before swimming in a public pool or in water of uncertain cleanliness.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When may I cut my hair again?

Three weeks after surgery.

When may I dye my hair?

Three weeks after surgery.

How long until I may get my hair straightened?

Four weeks after surgery.

When may I travel?

Travel within North America is allowed 24 hours after surgery. However, we encourage all patients to allow 48 hours prior to traveling more than 3 hours, and especially internationally.

When may I drink alcohol?

Once you are off narcotic pain medications. However, if you experienced increased bleeding, please ask the surgeon when you may resume alcohol consumption.

When can I go in the sun?

A little sun is helpful in the healing process, but please avoid getting a sunburn. Please be cautious for the first 10 days after the procedure and avoid the sun during the peak hours of 11am to 3pm. We also recommend being thoughtful not to get a sunburn on your scalp for the first month

How often can I wear my hat?

It is better to have your head open to the air rather than within a warm, moist environment. However, as long as the hat is clean, you may wear it right away (but as little as possible for the first week). After 10 days, you may wear your hat normally.

If I wear a hairpiece, when may I wear it again?

Not for the first 10 days after surgery, and then as little as possible for the 2nd and 3rd weeks post-operatively. After the third week, you may wear it normally.

Should I use minoxidil solution, and for how long?

The transplanted hair will grow without minoxidil. However, we recommend it for 5 weeks postoperatively to (theoretically) accelerate healing and minimize postoperative loss of any original hair in the area. It may also accelerate the regrowth of transplanted hairs so some patients use it until they feel stubble growing (after approximately 2½ - 3 months).