

ANNIE CARDONE

PRE-SURGERY AND POST-SURGERY PROTOCOL

For any surgery requiring a local or general anaesthetic, preparation prior to surgery will predict how well you heal. If you are looking for reduced downtime, fast healing, minimal swelling and bruising, we have prepared some simple steps to follow to ensure your surgery is not only successful but also gives you the best possible chance of the outcome you are looking for.

How you prepare pre-op and post-op impacts how you heal, and that is in your hands.

PRE-SURGERY

VITAMINS

Vitamins Often Allowed or Recommended:

- Vitamin D: Supports bone health, immune function, and lowers post-op complication risks.
- Calcium: Maintains bone strength and normal muscle function.
- Iron: Prevents or treats anaemia, especially if blood loss is expected, but must be cleared by your doctor.
- Arnica Montana: Comes from a mountain plant and helps fade skin bruising. It is often taken as small pills under the tongue or used as a safe skin cream on closed skin.

- Bromelain: Comes from pineapples and helps reduce tissue swelling and inflammation. It is usually taken as a pill, often on an empty stomach. You can buy it on Amazon.

General Timing and Use:

- Start Time: Most guides suggest starting 2 to 4 days before your surgery date.
- Post-Surgery: Continue taking them for 4 to 10 days after your operation until bruises start to fade.
- Safety Note: Opinions on the exact herbal protocols can vary, and some surgeons prefer specific timelines to reduce bleeding risk. Always check with your own surgeon before starting any new supplement.

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements to Stop Before Surgery:

- Vitamin E: Acts as a strong blood thinner and increases bleeding risks.
- Fish Oil / Omega-3s: Can interfere with normal blood clotting at high doses.
- Herbal Remedies: Garlic, ginger, ginkgo biloba, and ginseng can dangerously alter blood pressure, bleeding times, or anaesthesia

Our medical professionals fully respect your process, and we kindly ask you respect theirs by ensuring you are transparent with them on your supplement intake, as this could impede

the procedure and recovery. Keeping everyone protected and safe is our priority.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

GLP 1 WEIGHT LOSS MEDICATION

Patients taking GLP-1 receptor agonist medications (like Ozempic, Wegovy, or Mounjaro) face a potential risk of delayed stomach emptying, which can lead to food aspiration during anaesthesia. While recent multi-society updates suggest many patients may safely continue these drugs with individualised risk assessments and liquid diets, many surgical centres still advise holding weekly injections 1 week prior or daily pills/injections 24 hours to a week prior.

Key Safety Considerations

- **Aspiration Risk:** Slowed digestion means food or liquid can remain in the stomach longer than normal, even after standard fasting.
- **Individual Plans:** Recommendations vary based on whether you take the drug for diabetes or weight loss, your specific dosage schedule, and the type of surgery.
- **Gastrointestinal Symptoms:** Patients experiencing nausea, vomiting, bloating, or abdominal pain may need to delay elective procedures or switch to a clear liquid diet 24 hours pre-surgery.

Action Steps

- **Disclose Usage:** Tell your surgeon, anaesthetist, and care team about your GLP-1 medication well in advance.

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Tablet form of HRT needs to be stopped 4 weeks prior to surgery to prevent blood clots and complications during and after a general anaesthetic. Any exit strategy should be under your doctor's care. Transitioning to a cream, pessary or patch is advisable if you are unable to stop completely. You can resume tablet HRT 4 weeks after surgery.

PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION

Please consult your psychiatrist or general practitioner for individual advice on any psychiatric medication prior to surgery.

EXERCISE

In the lead-up to any surgery, it is advisable to be in the best physical shape you can. Walking is the best form of exercise if you are new to the concept. There will be a 4-6-week period post-surgery during which you will not be able to participate in strenuous exercise.

MINDSET

A positive mindset will always promote a positive procedure and healing period.

NUTRITION

For any surgery, it is medically advised to ensure your diet contains approx. 120 grams of protein. This helps your tissue repair.

SUPPORT

It is recommended that you have a companion to stay with you during the initial procedure and post-care. Having this support to ensure you have everything you need during this rest and recovery period is vital, as in some procedures your mobility may be limited for 49-72 hrs after surgery.

Make sure you are supported by like-minded, positive friends and family members. Surgery is a huge undertaking and negativity can cause uncertainty and emotional distress. As long as you are comfortable with your choice of surgeon and have done your own research, then trust the process and set your expectations to a realistic outcome.

POST SURGERY

TOP TIPS FOR FAST FACELIFT RECOVERY

Rest for first 48-72 hours

Expect swelling around the neck and cheeks which will impede your ability to talk and open your mouth.

Ensure you have a child's toothbrush and a supply of protein drinks and yoghurts or baby food for the first few days

Swelling peaks at day 3-4 and then will start to subside slowly over the next few months

Try to avoid over-analysing yourself in the mirror at this stage.

Let the healing process take care of itself whilst you take care

Expect a lack of symmetry in your face and neck as the swelling does not subside equally on each side of your face

Expect the swelling to have good days and bad days as you start to resume your normal activities. Over-activity will

increase the swelling, as will salty food, alcohol, and generally doing too much.

The total healing process for a facelift can take up to a year so be gentle on yourself and your journey

Take pain medication regularly as recommended by your health care team.

Take antibiotics as prescribed

Take daily vitamins and essential bromelain and arnica plus a probiotic

No bending down

Wear compression garment as directed by your surgeon

Apply antibiotic cream to wounds as directed by your surgeon

Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated

Gentle walking in a cool, indoor environment to protect wounds and healing

Stay out of heat to reduce swelling

Sleep on your back in a raised position 30 degrees minimum

Keep room cool at 20 degrees to prevent overheating, which will increase swelling overnight

Wear support garment as recommended by your surgeon

Use antibiotic cream on your wounds as advised by your surgeon

Ice and cold press on swollen areas – be very gentle around wounds

Sleep as much as possible

120 grams of protein per day

No salt or salty foods

For destination surgery, bring laxatives for post-flight or post-surgery stomach issues.

On Day 4, you will start to feel better, BUT do not go back to your daily routine. This is crucial to stay doing your protocol. By days 7-9, you should no longer require painkillers every 4 hours, but do use them as needed for soreness.

By day 10, I was only on paracetamol and ibuprofen for inflammation, taken twice a day, and that kept me comfortable.

Expect tingling sensations under your skin; this is the nerve endings repairing and healing so it is a weird feeling but a welcome one.

1. Eat regularly and try to add 120 grams of protein to your diet post-recovery; this will help your tissue repair faster.
2. Bromelain and arnica for swelling and bruising
3. Stay hydrated and put electrolytes in your water for a boost.

VITAMINS

Daily vitamin essentials

Including Bromelain (pineapple) and Arnica

Add a probiotic post-surgery to combat the antibiotics which would have destroyed your healthy bacteria.

EXERCISE

Always follow your surgeon's advice post-surgery. Do not rush back to working out. Start off with gentle walks and keep your body cool. Overheating leads to more swelling.

As a guide you should start walking within 24 to 48 hours after most general or minimally invasive surgeries, focusing

on short, frequent movement, such as pacing your room or hallway. However, the exact timeline depends entirely on your specific procedure, especially if your surgery involved bones, joints, or your feet.

General Timelines by Surgery Type

- Laparoscopic / Minor Procedures: Walk within 24 to 48 hours to boost blood flow and prevent clots.
- Open Abdominal Surgery: Walk within 48 to 72 hours, as soon as your medical team clears you.

Safe Walking Tips for Faster Healing

- Start Small: Begin with very short walks, such as a few steps or one lap around a room, every 1 to 2 hours during the day.
- Increase Gradually: Add a little more distance each day only if your body feels ready.
- Use Support: Use a walker, cane, or crutches if you feel weak, dizzy, or unstable.

MINDSET AND MENTAL HEALTH

Managing your mental health after surgery involves establishing a daily routine, practising relaxation techniques, and staying connected with loved ones. Post-surgery emotional lows, anxiety, and frustration are common responses to physical trauma, pain, and changes in independence

Daily Routines and Goals

- Set small goals: Focus on tiny, achievable tasks each day to build a sense of progress.
- Keep a predictable schedule: Wake up, eat, and rest around the same times to give your day structure.
- Move gently: Do short walks or light stretches only if your doctor says it is safe.

Mind and Body Care

- Practice relaxation: Use deep breathing or slow meditation to lower stress and handle pain.
- Eat and hydrate well: Drink plenty of water and eat nutritious foods to support brain function and stable moods.
- Prioritize sleep:
- Maintain a calm resting environment to help your brain and body heal.
- Be careful if you have pets sleeping in your bed. Make sure your pillow is as sterile as possible, and all wounds are covered. The last thing you need is a secondary infection.

Emotional Support and Coping

- Stay in touch: Talk regularly with friends and family about how you feel.
- Acknowledge feelings: Accept that frustration or sadness is normal during recovery instead of fighting it.
- Seek professional help: Reach out to a counselor or doctor if anxiety or depression feels too heavy to manage alone

REST

Rest is vital after surgery because it speeds up tissue repair, prevents wound strain, and fights infections.

Physical Healing

- Repairs cells: Deep sleep releases growth hormones that rebuild damaged skin, muscle, and tissue.
- Protects the wound: Staying still stops extra stress and pulling on your stitches or surgical cuts.
- Fights germs: Your immune system gets stronger during rest to keep infections away.

Pain and Energy Control

- Lowers pain: A well-rested brain handles and reduces pain much better than a tired one.
- Restores energy: Healing takes a lot of energy; resting saves that power for your body to fix itself

SUPPORT

Emotional support after surgery involves managing anxiety, dealing with post-op mood drops, and building a strong network. Key needs include reassurance from loved ones, mindfulness practices, and professional counselling if sadness or stress becomes overwhelming.

Coping with Mood Changes

- Expect low moods: Anaesthesia, pain, and sleep loss often cause temporary sadness or frustration during the first week. I cried for no reason at all on days 2 and 3

and felt very emotional. All very normal; you have been through a lot. Be gentle with yourself and your recovery.

- Avoid isolation: Talk openly with family or friends who listen without judgment.
- Set small goals: Focus on tiny daily wins to rebuild your confidence and sense of progress.

Practical Mental Strategies

- Practice relaxation: Use slow breathing exercises or meditation to lower stress and calm your mind.
- Keep a calm space: Limit loud noises, bright lights, and negative news to protect your energy.
- Join a group: Connect with peer support networks to share healing stories and feel understood

We hope this carefully researched and prepared document aids yours journey with us.

We take your health and wellbeing as seriously as medical team and want your best outcome.

**The Pure Light Center – Izmir Turkey
and**

Annie Cardone xoxoxo