



First Week After Plastic Surgery:

WHAT TO EXPECT & HOW TO RECOVER

Your first week after surgery is one of the most important phases of recovery. This guide outlines what you can expect during this period and how to take care of yourself for the best possible outcome.

Incisions and Stitches

- Incisions are placed along natural lines such as the hairline and in front of the ear.
- Tiny black sutures (stitches) are visible at first but are small and will be removed around day 7.
- These sutures help your skin heal precisely and minimize visible scarring.

Drains

- Most patients have two drains:
 - Deep drain: removes fluid from the deeper neck space.
 - Superficial drain: collects fluid just under the skin.
- Drains are typically removed between day 3–5, depending on output.
- Removing drains helps reduce swelling and allows you to feel more comfortable moving around.

Swelling and Bruising

- Bruising and swelling peak around day 5–7.
- Bruising may be more visible where fat grafting was performed (chin, cheeks, under eyes, temples, brows).
- Muscles in the neck may feel slightly swollen or firm—this will soften and narrow with time.
- Even early in recovery, you should already see improvements in your jawline and facial definition.

Activity and Positioning

- Rest and recovery are essential. Even if you feel energetic, avoid pushing yourself.
- Sleep flat on your back (not on your side or at an incline). This helps:
 - Keep skin in the correct position.
 - Improve lymphatic drainage and reduce swelling.
- Avoid bending your chin to your chest.

Activity Timeline:

- First week: Walking around the house is fine. No lifting.
- Day 10: May begin lifting light objects (like groceries).
- 2 weeks: Safe to lift 5+ pounds.
- 4 weeks: Return to bodyweight exercises.
- 6 weeks: Start lifting weights at 25% of your usual max.
- 8 weeks: Resume all activities.
- 3 months: You should feel fully “back to normal.”

Pain and Comfort

- Most patients experience minimal pain, well-controlled with medications.
- The biggest challenge is sleeping on your back without turning, which may feel uncomfortable but is crucial for healing.

Diet and Nutrition

What you eat directly impacts your recovery:

Focus on:

- High protein foods for healing.
- Plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Vegetables and balanced meals.

Avoid for the first 2 weeks (and ideally up to 4 weeks):

- Sour foods (citrus, sour candies).
- Super spicy foods.
- Excess sugar.
- High-salt foods, which can cause swelling.

Energy Levels

- It's normal to feel like you have energy but need to hold yourself back.
- Focus on gentle recovery and patience—every day you'll feel more like yourself.

Looking Ahead

- By the end of week one, stitches are usually removed and drains are gone.
- This makes it easier to move around and start light daily activities.
- Each week, swelling improves, bruising fades, and your results become clearer.

Key Takeaway

The first week is about patience, positioning, proper diet, and gentle recovery. Follow these steps and you'll notice a dramatic improvement early on—your results will continue to refine with time.