

Managing pain after eye surgery

Description

Gentle Reader,

While this blog is primarily about arthritis management, I wanted to use this platform to let you know about managing pain after my recent eye surgery. I have suffered from impaired vision for several years due to a droopy eye lid condition which is corrected by Blepharoplasty. Here's a little video so you can see how I'm doing.



Blepharoplasty (BLEF-uh-ro-plas-tee) is surgery that includes repairing droopy eyelids by removing excess skin, muscle and fat. As you age, your eyelids stretch, and the muscles supporting them weaken. As a result, excess fat may gather above and below your eyelids, causing sagging eyebrows, drooping upper lids and bags under your eyes. Besides making you look older, severely sagging skin around your eyes can impair your peripheral or side vision. Blepharoplasty can reduce or eliminate such impaired vision.

There is a diagnostic procedure to determine if the droopy eyelids are in fact causing trouble seeing. I failed this test (or passed it, depending on your point of view) 3 years

ago. In other words, I could not see flashing points of light in the upper half of the visual field when my eyes were relaxed.

The Blepharoplasty surgery is authorized by most health insurance plans, however I was referred to a glamour doctor who specialized in cosmetic surgery. He suggested all kinds of extra tucks and tweeks which the insurance company turned down. I was interested only in corrective surgery so I could see better and not feel so much muscle strain lifting my eyelid all the time.

The clinic where I get my medical care, The Polyclinic here in Seattle, brought Dr. Yokoyama on to do just this type of corrective surgery. The insurance company agreed and last Friday, I had incisions in the lids both on top and on the inside.

I am very happy with the results. The healing is not over yet as you can see in the video. My job is to use hot compresses several times a day and tug on the lids to pull them down and counteract the scar tissue which could give my lids a permanent and exaggerated lift. I can tell you it is wonderful to see the ceiling when I look straight ahead, and the tree branches and sky from the upper reaches of my eyes.

What I want to share with you is the medication, vitamin and herbal regimen I undertook.

Pre Op: Instructions were to stop all vitamins. I chose to stop the vitamins I know to make the blood thinner: Fish oil, GLA oil (Borage or Evening Primrose oil), Garlic, Vitamin E. I also increased the vitamins known to repair and support the integrity of the cell, Vitamin C, and Alfalfa which is full of vitamin K, a natural blood thickener found in green leafy vegetables.

The result was that I bled very little.

Post Op: Instructions were to take Vicodin every 4 hours for 48 hours and Prednisone (60 mg) for 3 – 4 days to cut down on inflammation.

Here's what I did instead. I did take Vicodin for the first 18 hours and then switched to [Pain Relief Complex](#), an herbal COX 2 and 5 LOX inhibitor which worked just as well. To take care of the constipation that comes with the deadening effect of Vicodin, I took 2 [Herb lax](#) tablets with each meal and 2 more at night. One of the worse side effects of surgery is the constipation that follows anesthetic and pain meds. This is a healthy way to avoid this problem.

I did take the Prednisone for anti inflammatory but only 60 mg the first day and 40 the next. The swelling was a bit much on day three, so I took another 40 mg. Now on day 6 all I need to do is hot compresses. I iced faithfully every couple of hours the first 48 hours which I know helped considerably.

Here's my disclaimer. If you decided to follow your doctor to the letter or to deviate from their advice, it is up to you. Every body is different and reacts differently. Who knows if it would work for you the way it worked for me? But, as I always add, what if it does?

Many of my friends have already had this surgery and I understand it is common for women to consider having their eye lids done and other tucks to lift sagging facial skin as early as their 40s and 50s. I waited until 75 and I wish I had done this sooner. One of my daughters beat me to it, getting her eyes done in her 40s.

You might pass this information on to someone you know who might like to hear about some alternatives to the usual course of treatment. Leave your comments. We'd all love to hear.

Betsy

Be well, Do well and Keep Moving

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