

Prabhat K. Bhamra, MD, MPH, FACS
Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
Center for Facial Paralysis
Providence Medical Group
www.washingtonplasticsurg.com

Important phone numbers:

1. Providence Regional Medical Center Everett: (425) 261-2000
2. Providence Mill Creek ENT Clinic: (425) 316-5100
3. Providence North Everett ENT Clinic: (425) 297-5350

**PARAMEDIAN FOREHEAD FLAP
BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR SURGERY**

Thank you for choosing Providence Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery for your care. Please follow these instructions for care of your wound. Do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.

Forehead flap surgery is typically performed to reconstruct defects of the nose from skin cancer treatment or trauma. It entails taking a piece of skin from the forehead and transferring it to the nose while keeping the forehead skin attached to its blood supply. This blood supply is called the flap *pedicle*. The pedicle has to remain intact for 3 weeks after surgery, because it provides your new nasal skin with blood flow. The pedicle has a raw edge to it, which means it will bleed and become crusted. Over the subsequent three weeks, your nose will develop new blood flow connections to the forehead skin that was transferred to the defect. At that time, Dr. Bhamra will detach the pedicle during the second stage of reconstruction. It is very important that you take good care of your wound to ensure proper healing. Do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions.

Overall Surgery Timeline:

1. First surgery is to reconstruct the nose with the forehead flap.
2. First follow up is usually 5-10 days after the first surgery for a wound check and suture removal. You may require an additional follow-up after this.
3. Second surgery is to detach the pedicle, which is usually 3-4 weeks after the first surgery.
4. Sometimes, Dr. Bhamra will recommend dermabrasion, which is usually performed 6 weeks after your last surgery. This can help optimize the appearance of your scar.
5. Follow up appointments after this are variable.

Before your operation:

1. Do not take any of the following medications for 4 weeks prior to surgery:
 - a. Aspirin (unless it is a 81 mg dose required by your primary care provider)
 - b. Advil containing compounds (Motrin, Alleve, etc.)
 - c. Herbal supplements (Ginko, Ginseng, Garlic, etc.)
 - d. Fish oil
 - e. Vitamin E
2. Do not smoke for at least 6 weeks before AND after surgery. This includes tobacco, marijuana, cigars, pipes, etc.
3. Do not drink alcohol for 7 days before surgery.
4. Make sure to purchase a few things over the counter:
 - a. Aquaphor[®]
 - b. Non-adherent gauze pad
 - c. Gauze pad
 - d. Hydrogen peroxide (you will dilute this 1:1 with clean water)
 - e. Paper Tape
 - f. Cotton tipped applicators
 - g. Ice packs
 - h. BioCorneum Scar Treatment Plus SPF[®]

Specific aftercare instructions:

1. Do not blow your nose.
2. While sleeping, keep your head elevated on at least two pillows for the first 2 weeks after surgery so your head is at 45 degrees or more. This will help your swelling.
3. During the day, it's ok to apply an ice bag on the top of the forehead only. Do not get ice on the bottom of the forehead, or on the nose, or the pedicle.
4. The swelling will peak at 48 – 72 hours post-operatively.
5. Do not consume alcohol in the first couple weeks after surgery.
6. Usually, Dr. Bhama will recommend only Tylenol and Ibuprofen for pain. You can take these around the clock per the instructions on the bottle. If required, you may take extra narcotic pain medication if prescribed.
7. DIET:
 - a. On the day of surgery, take a light diet of liquids only. The next day, you may start a soft diet. For two weeks, avoid hard foods that would require moving your lip a lot (large hamburger, corn on the cob, etc.).
 - b. Do not use straws.
 - c. Minimize your salt intake to help reduce swelling.
 - d. Do not drink alcohol – alcohol and pain medications taken together can be dangerous. Alcohol can also worsen your swelling.
8. It is normal to have some bleeding under the nostrils for a few days after surgery. You may tape a gauze under your nose and change it as needed if you like.
9. Do not sniff or blow your nose for 2 weeks after surgery. If you sneeze, make sure you keep your mouth open.
10. It's ok to shower 48 hours after surgery, but if you had ear cartilage harvest or rib cartilage harvest, do not get those areas wet either.

11. WOUND CARE:

- a. If you had ear cartilage harvest – you may remove the large over the ear dressing and apply bacitracin to the inner dressing three times a day. Then replace the outer ear dressing.
- b. If you had rib cartilage harvest – no care is needed for this.
- c. If you had a skin graft – it is ok to get the site wet after 24 hours, but do not soak the site. Apply Aquaphor® to the site three times daily.
- d. For the forehead, GENTLY clean with mild soapy water twice daily. For crusts, clean with a cotton-tipped applicator soaked in ½ strength hydrogen peroxide three times daily using a rolling motion. Apply bacitracin to the wounds three times daily. After three days, discontinue use bacitracin and use Aquaphor® instead.
- e. Be VERY GENTLE with the bottom part of the forehead – this is where the pedicle starts. There is no need to clean this area – only apply the ointment.
- f. For the pedicle, DO NOT APPLY PRESSURE. Apply a generous amount of bacitracin three times daily to the pedicle very carefully. For this area, continue to use bacitracin.
- g. For the nose, GENTLY clean with mild soapy water twice daily. For crusts, clean with a cotton-tipped applicator soaked in ½ strength hydrogen peroxide three times daily using a rolling motion. Apply bacitracin to the wounds three times daily. After three days, discontinue use bacitracin and use Aquaphor® instead.

General Instructions:

1. ACTIVITY:

- a. No strenuous activity (anything that increases your heart rate above 100 beats per minute such as aerobics, heavy lifting, bending over) for 4 weeks after surgery.
 - b. After the first two post-operative weeks, you can slowly increase your activity level until back to normal levels at the 4-week point.
 - c. Someone should drive you home after surgery and remain at home with you for 1-2 days.
 - d. You should not drive since the flap will block a portion of your vision.
 - e. You SHOULD start walking as soon as possible after surgery. This will help reduce your risk of blood clots and improve swelling.
2. Do not worry if your nose and forehead feel numb or “tingly” after surgery. This is completely normal and will improve over the subsequent few weeks to months. Since your scalp may be numb, make sure you set your hair dryer on a cool setting to avoid burns to the scalp.
 3. Swelling will continue to improve over the next few weeks. It takes up to a full year for the swelling to completely resolve.
 4. Avoid wearing clothes that need to be pulled over your head, like a turtleneck. The pressure on your nose can move important grafts that were used in your surgery.
 5. *Call the office immediately if:* you have nausea, vomiting, rash, shortness of breath, diarrhea, a fever, redness or increased pain at the surgical site.

Long-term care:

1. The facial skin is very sensitive to ultraviolet light after surgery. Keep your face out of the sun as much as possible. Wearing a wide-brimmed hat and using sun block can be helpful. Our Mill Creek Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery clinic sells an ideal sunblock for this purpose.
2. Start massaging the incisions and using scar cream 3 weeks AFTER the SECOND stage of the surgery (detaching the pedicle).
3. Do not use make-up, sunblock, oils, lotions, or any other supplements to the skin until 3 weeks after the pedicle is detached.