

BROW- AND CORONAL-LIFTS

APPROXIMATE COST:

Coronal Brow-Lift: \$3,700 - \$4,700

There may be additional charges for surgical facilities and anesthesia. Be sure to request this information.

APPROXIMATE TIME UNTIL COMPLETELY HEALED: 8 to 12 weeks.

PRESURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- You will be given blood and lab tests within two weeks prior to your surgery.
- Take no aspirin or aspirin-containing products (see list of medications to avoid) for two weeks prior to your surgery and one week after. They can cause bleeding and bruising. You may take Tylenol.
- Avoid sunbathing the face for two weeks prior to surgery.
- If you take medication daily, notify your doctor. Also tell him if you develop any illness, a cold or any skin infections about the face and neck within a week of your surgery.
- If you're a smoker, you should clearly understand that nicotine could impair and delay healing. Most offices will suggest quitting a week to ten days before surgery, a week post-op. If it were me, I'd stop smoking a minimum of three weeks prior to surgery, and not touch a cigarette for a full month post-op. Who needs to be left with scars worse than normal and other complications as a result of smoking through the pre- and postsurgical period?

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

Do not eat or drink anything after midnight. The night before surgery, shower and shampoo your hair and cleanse your face. Some offices may ask you to take pills with a small amount of water the day of surgery.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

- You may rinse and brush your teeth, but *do not eat or drink anything* (except your pills, if you
- were instructed to swallow them the morning of the surgery with the tiniest sip of water).
- Wear no makeup and remove contact lenses and dentures for surgery. *Do not put any moisturizer on your eyes or face.*

- Do not bring any jewelry or valuables. Wear a robe, housecoat or warmup suit that buttons or zips in the front, and wear flat shoes. *No tight fitting clothes.*
- *Someone must drive you home and stay with you the first night.*
- Postoperative instructions regarding activity, medications and office visits will be given following your surgery.

THE SURGERY

If you have eyebrows that sit too low or droop too close to the eye, you'll want to consider a brow-lift. The surgery takes approximately one-half. Add an additional half your for preparation and anesthesia. There are normally four people in the operating room with you: the surgeon, the anesthesiologist and two surgical nurses.

An incision is made either at the hairline or one or two finger widths behind the hairline. If you like the option of wearing your hair away from your face, it's a better choice to request the incision behind the hairline, if it's surgically acceptable to your doctor and will produce the desired visual results. Always discuss the placement of incision lines with your doctor before surgery so you won't be surprised and unhappy with the choice of placement when you wake up and it's too late.

The incision usually runs a length of six to eight centimeters, depending on the amount and direction of lift the patient desires. In discussing the final results before surgery, be sure you understand exactly what the doctor has in mind. A brow- or coronal-lift that is pulled too high can leave you with a startled or seizure disorder look--something you want to avoid at all costs. The skin is freed-up (separated from underlying tissues) from the incision down to the brow, then lifted to raise the center to the outer-tip portion of the brow up and back toward the high temple region.

Excess skin is trimmed and the incision is closed with stitches. The stitches are removed 12 to 14 days after surgery. It's important not to have the stitches removed too soon from a brow or a coronal lift. The pulling-up of the lift in these areas is so tight that unless the incision line is amply healed and secured, you could end up with a wide scar as a result of the incision's pulling apart from lack of stitch or staple support. So let your doctor take as much time as he wants before any stitch removal.

Another procedure, referred to as Brow-Pexy, is also available as a separate choice to correct the drooping brow for male patients. The brow is lifted gently and actually secured to the brow bone. This procedure gives a mini-brow-lift result.

If you have excessive forehead skin with deep lines across the forehead or loose skin between the brows above the nose, the full coronal-forehead-lift is the choice to make.

An incision called a coronal incision is made approximately four finger widths behind the hairline. The incision runs from one ear clear across the scalp to the other ear. The scalp and forehead skin are then freed up all the way down to the brows and lifted back up to the coronal incision line. The

excess scalp and hair are trimmed away, and the incision is closed with a tight row of stainless steel surgical staples or with sutures.

Do not panic! I know the staples sound horrible, but they really don't hurt. Everything is so numb and tight-feeling up there for about 8 to 12 weeks following surgery that you will not feel more than a slight pulling sensation here and there. If your doctor closes your coronal incision with sutures, you'll still have a tight sensation in the area, but it may be a little less severe than with the staples. It can be a bit unpleasant having the staples removed 12 to 14 days following surgery, but the removal is more annoying than painful. Don't be surprised if three or four of them are quite tender on the way out. It all goes very quickly, and once they're out you'll immediately begin to feel better and more relaxed. Following the removal be sure to ask the nurse to double-check for any possible overlooked staples or sutures. It's easy to bypass a single staple or stitch here and there, and although it's not medically dangerous, it will save you an extra trip back into the office if they are all detected and removed at once.

Be sure to have a conversation with your doctor before surgery, insisting that the nurses who prep you the day of surgery either braid or separate your hair into sections to prevent horrendous tangling from blood coagulation into the hair. If that occurs, you may have to have chunks of hair cut out.

Muscles that produce wrinkles in the forehead and frown lines between the eyes can be severed at the time of coronal surgery to prevent them from returning or becoming more severe over time. However, a word of caution to actors: The cutting of muscles between the eyebrows can limit your facial movement and can therefore alter your range of expressions. You need to clearly discuss the pros and cons of this decision with your doctor before the actual surgery.

POSTSURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Rest quietly for one or two days. Then limit yourself to light activities. This means no housework heavier than rinsing a dish. Sleep with your head elevated for about ten days.
- Avoid straining, exercise or head-down positions, all of which may cause unnecessary swelling or bleeding.
- Consider discomfort as an indication that you have been too active. **REST!** Take whatever prescribed medication your doctor has given you to help cut discomfort or to relax.
- You may gently shampoo your hair with warm water right over the staples or sutures (baby shampoo or Neutrogena is preferred), beginning the day the dressing is removed, or sooner if no dressings were used. Ask your doctor exactly when you're allowed to shampoo. A shower is preferable to a bath in which the wound would be submerged.

THE RECOVERY PERIOD

You will be loosely bandaged for the 24 hours following surgery. A small amount of wound bleeding or ooze is natural for the first 48 hours.

Expect major numbness of the scalp and forehead for 8 to 12 weeks following the brow-lift or the coronal procedure. Swelling will occur immediately, leaving your forehead looking slightly inflated, and there will be a shiny quality to the skin. Don't worry--both symptoms usually disappear within the eight-week recovery period, leaving your forehead nice and taut with normal-looking skin.

Minimal bruising around and below the eyes will often occur with a brow- or coronal-lift; it usually disappears in three to eight weeks.

Following a coronal, you will experience a very tight feeling like a bathing cap a couple of sizes too small. It normally passes within the eight to 12-week recovery period, and you can usually ignore the tight sensation with the help of Tylenol. If you are a person prone to severe headaches or migraines, I strongly recommend you avoid coronal surgery. The constricted sensation over the head would probably be too uncomfortable for too many weeks. Choose another procedure if possible.

Expect the incision lines to rise up and turn bright pink before they flatten out and lose color. Often, just after the stitches or staples are removed, the incision line itself is so swollen it can create a slight separation in your hair. Because of this it is a good idea not to have your hair shorter than three or four inches before surgery. That way you have enough hair so that you can style some back over the separation.

As mentioned before, the corneal sutures must never be removed too early. There's so much tension on that particular incision that if the sutures are removed before 12 to 14 days post-op, you run a large risk of being left with a wide scar. Hair won't grow through a scar, and you'd have a permanent separation in your hair. This is the kind of problem you want to avoid.

Expect major numbness over the entire scalp and forehead for about 8 to 12 weeks. *Be very careful* when using electric appliances like hair dryers or curling irons during your numb period. Because you'll have no way of judging the heat, you could seriously burn your scalp without realizing it. Use all appliances on a low setting until your normal sensation returns.

Expect a loss of hair. You have had at least a one-inch strip cut out of your scalp and hair in order to pull everything up. Therefore, you'll have that much less hair on your head overall. Thick-haired people usually don't miss the loss, but it is something to be aware of if you have thin, fine hair. Know too that your hairline will be a little higher than it was before surgery. If you have an extremely high forehead, you may want to avoid coronal surgery.

PROBLEM SIGNS

Call your doctor at once if there is excessive bleeding from incision lines.

Occasionally a patient is left with permanent numbness around and near the incision line. It doesn't happen often, but it can happen.

MAKEUP TRICKS

About a week after the stitches or staples have been removed, you can camouflage any red incision lines in your hair by gently applying a soft eyebrow pencil in a color close to your hair color.