

# WELL-HEALED

Who knew upping your protein intake and curbing your Brian Atwood shoe habit could affect your cosmetic procedures? WENDY SCHMID gets advice from the pros on achieving maximum results.



WHEN AN INTERNET BEAUTY EXEC RETURNED from lunch with a hefty bruise creeping up her cheek, she feigned slipping on a curb. Colleagues guessed otherwise. “Post-injection bruising,” they surmised, and they were probably right. If she’d known to lay off aspirin and to reschedule her appointment for after her period, she might have avoided that tell-tale raspberry. And isn’t that the goal of a nip-tuck, to emerge new and improved without any visible signs? These pre- and post-procedure tips can help you avoid such pitfalls—and potentially improve your results.

Bruising is the most common post-treatment giveaway, and doctors like Francesca Fusco work hard to help patients avoid it. Years on dermatology’s front lines have helped Fusco perfect what works—right down to inquiring about a patient’s cycle. “When we’re premenstrual, our skin and blood vessels are more ‘leaky’ and prone to prolonged bruising, so I recommend avoiding injections on those days,” says the Manhattan dermatologist.

Eliminating certain supplements also helps. Nix Aspirin, ibuprofen, cold medicines, vitamin E, omega-3, garlic and anything else that thins the blood for up to two weeks before injections, laser work, ultrasound or surgery. “The reason some of these supplements are good for you is because they make your platelets less sticky,” says Toronto-based plastic surgeon Dr. Frank Lista. “But if you’re having surgery or even Botox or Juvederm and your platelets aren’t sticky, you’ll get more bruising.” Instead, try taking homeopathic herbals like arnica montana and bromelain pre- and post-procedure to lower your chances of becoming black and blue (after a facelift, your doctor may also recommend a cream version). If Botox is on your agenda, you might want to consider taking the new supplement Zytaze for several days before heading to the doctor. The blend of zinc and phytase (an enzyme) has been shown to help the effects of the muscle freezer last longer—up to 30 per cent, according to one clinical trial. “About a dozen of my patients have used it and confirmed this,” says Fusco.

Longer-lasting Botox is only ideal, mind you, if it’s relaxing the right spots, and though it often goes unmentioned, migration after injections is possible. If you don’t want the toxin moving south like a certain national fowl, stay as vertical as you can for the rest of the day. No working out, rubbing your forehead, wearing hats, playing with your dog or shoe shopping, advises Fusco. “Don’t do anything that requires leaning »

forward—I've had patients get head-butted by their child!" (If a patient does have a mishap and experiences short-term eyelid droop, using a microcurrent device like the NuFace Trinity can help by contracting the brow's frontalis muscle and temporarily lifting the lid.)

Juvéderm, Restylane and the new hyaluronic acid filler Voluma are thicker substances, but for best results they too need time to settle post-injection. It's also worth avoiding face-down massages and chiropractic appointments for 48 hours post-treatment. Regular beauty appointments may need a rethink as well; just use Bluetooth to reschedule, as germmy phones shouldn't be anywhere near your face. Skin should be spray-tan-free before laser work to avoid drawing too much heat and causing a burn, and hair can't be coloured for at least 48 hours afterwards. Botox, meanwhile, can tweak your eyebrow shape almost as much as your favourite waxer does, so Fusco recommends waiting and timing brow grooming for two weeks after injections.

Doctors are increasingly trying to prep patients on dos and don'ts and keep them on track to provide a

rest period and had a viewing party days after surgery. "She tripped and fell while carrying a tray of drinks to her girlfriends, and her implant popped right out of the unhealed incision," he says. In another case, a rhinoplasty patient was told to use ice on her forehead for brief intervals to help with swelling. "She wanted to heal faster, so instead she put the ice right on her nose for hours, and she got frostbite on the tip!" he exclaims. "Tissues need time to heal. If you rush it, you'll slow the process."

That said, there are safe ways to speed things up. "I usually say no camera work for celebrities for six weeks, but one actress wanted a facelift while her TV show was on hiatus. She gave me 14 days," says Chia Chi Kao, a Santa Monica-based plastic surgeon. He hit the deadline and kept her work under the radar with the help of an on-site hyperbaric chamber. Patients use it for multiple 90-minute sessions during the week after surgery to shorten recovery time. "The pressurized chamber helps mobilize the lymphatic fluid, reducing swelling by about a week," says Kao, who is sought out for

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better overall experience. Fusco offers derm-approved swag after laser and ultrasound treatments: "I send them home with a goodie bag of gentle cleansers and moisturizers," she says. Toronto cosmetic plastic surgeon Dr. Trevor Born went so far as to launch Reborn Nutrasurgicals, a line of immune-boosting supplements, healing topicals and protein shakes to help patients through prep and recovery. "Surgery is stressful on the whole body," says Born. "Even the microflora of the bowels go into a state of disruption, and the shakes prepare the body and help to repopulate the flora and reduce inflammation with healing nutrients." Even more reason to drink up: Albumin is a blood protein that helps speed overall healing, and increasing your dietary protein means you'll have better albumin levels in your blood, explains Lista. He advises patients to get 80 grams a day in the weeks before and after surgery.

Of course, advising patients and getting them to listen don't always go hand in hand. "We tell them not to arrive for facelift surgery with any cream or makeup on, but I've had patients come in with moisturizer, mascara and a full blowout," says Born. "Mascara can cause infection, and if they have cream on, I can't make the necessary marks on their face with marker."

The days after surgery can be just as problematic if patients don't follow directions. Lista recalls a breast augmentation patient who opted out of the advised

his minimal-incision endoscopic lift—a technique he likens to the lifting effect you get from a high ponytail.

Manual lymph-draining massage also works; according to Born, it's safest after week three, when new collagen deposition has made the tissues more stable. The doctor who treated Kelsey Patton\*, an L.A.-based public relations executive, prescribed it after her facelift, referring her to a pro used by a number of surgeons. "It definitely sped healing," she says. Another thing her aesthetician prescribed: scar-fading gel. "I used it for several months, and it really diminished the scars behind my ears. I'm 67 but passing for 50," she says. Lista suggests Scarfade or Dermatrix Ultra Advanced Scar Treatment. "We don't know why these silicone-based ointments work, but studies show they do."

Just as starting with great skin is important, feeding skin the right nutrients in the first few weeks after surgery can help you bounce back new and improved. Kao's post-procedure protocol includes a stem cell facial and a variety of take-home serums, one made with stem cells from New Zealand sheep placenta, another with peptides and hyaluronic acid to ease post-surgery dryness. "It's about addressing skin at the cellular level; we're gently driving in protein products. I look at it as continued fertilization of the skin, and I'm passionate about it," he says. "My goal is that you won't need any more surgery in the future." □

\*NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED