



GENERAL SURGICAL RISKS

In general, elective surgery is safe and beneficial. However, there are major and minor complications that can occur. The following is some general information regarding surgical risks. Please read the information carefully before scheduling your surgery. Feel free to ask us any questions that you may have. Keeping risks to an absolute minimum is our main goal.

- **INFECTION**- The body has very good natural defenses against infection. Nevertheless, a post operative infection can still occur. This may appear as redness and may include some discharge. An infection may require some antibiotic treatment or additional surgical measures. Contact the office at the first sign of infection or if you suspect an infection is developing.
- **HEMMORAGE**- Surgical procedures involve the cutting of the blood vessels. At the time of surgery, measures will be taken to prevent excess bleeding. If bleeding occurs after you are home, please call our office. You may need to come in for additional treatment.
- **DRUG REACTIONS**- Although our office and the hospital ask you about any allergies you have to medications, it is possible for you to have an adverse reaction to a medication. Allergic reactions can be mild or severe. Call our office immediately so effective treatment can begin.
- **ANESTHESIA REACTIONS**- Anesthetic medications are safe, but it is possible to experience an adverse reaction. This could lead to problems with your lungs, heart or nervous system. Acute respiratory failure, cardiac events or strokes are very rare, but possible, and have life threatening or permanent long term effects.
- **BLOOD CLOTS**- Inflammation of the blood vessels (thrombophlebitis) and/or clots (thrombosis) may occur. There is a risk that a clot can travel to other areas of your body, which can cause serious complications. Please call our office if you experience pain in your extremities, trouble breathing, chest pain tenderness or discoloration. If any of these symptoms occur, contact our office immediately.
- **NERVE DAMAGE**- Every effort will be made to prevent nerve damage, but it still could occur. This may lead to weakness of the muscle where the nerve was damaged or loss of sensation to an area.
- **NEUROLOGICAL REACTIONS**- Anesthetic or surgical complications could result in minor or significant neurological damage. It could also be a temporary problem or a permanent one. Facial surgery usually results in temporary numbness, decreased sensation and decreased muscle activity surrounding the surgical area. These reactions usually resolve on their own within a few days or a few weeks. A permanent loss of sensory or motor nerve function is possible, but quite rare.
- **WOUND HEALING**- It is within normal limits to become a little inflamed for the first few days after surgery. This may include redness or itchiness. Over the next several weeks, scar tissue is laid down. Wounds become firm, irregular and sometimes hypersensitive. It can take up to a full year for a scar to mature completely, become flat, soft and lighten in color. Wound healing varies with each individual, and may occasionally take longer than a year. Certain individuals can develop excess growth of a scar or even keloid scarring, but this is rare. If this does occur, these scars can usually be treated satisfactorily.

When the skin is cut, there is a compromise of the blood supply to surrounding tissues. For most patients these tissues will heal completely. However, with certain procedures, smoking and alcohol can pose significant risks to normal healing. In such situations there could be a loss of skin tissue with scarring, which may be improved, but never completely return to normal. ALL patients must cease smoking for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks following surgery. Alcohol consumption should also be minimized.

- **OTHER RISKS**- It is not possible to list all potential risks and complications involved in your specific procedure. Each situation depends on many factors including your general health, the procedure being preformed and any unknown variables. Major complications occur very rarely and are unpredictable. It is impossible to predict or prevent an unexpected outcome or complication. It is important for you to understand that when you choose to undergo elective surgery, you accept these risks that go along with it. Our staff will be pleased to discuss any further details of risks and complications with you, and to answer any of the questions you might have.
- **ALTERNATIVES**- You always have the right to ask for alternative treatment options, or elect to not have the procedure at all. Be sure to discuss these alternatives with us and have all your questions and concerns answered prior to making your decision. You should always balance the potential benefits of the procedure and associated risks as they relate to your own situation.