

The Importance of Post-Treatment Care: Best Practices for Ensuring Long-Term Patient Satisfaction

By Davina Isaacs, MBA—ACG Practice Partners

The complete plastic surgery and aesthetic treatment experience spans all stages from initial consultation through treatment to recovery. Each phase is a vital component of ensuring a positive patient experience.



Every procedure should come with a comprehensive aftercare plan, tailored to the specifics of the treatment.

Too often, practices assume that the patient's experience ends once a procedure is completed but the post-treatment period is just as crucial to patient satisfaction as the procedure itself. The healing process and patient experience benefit greatly from proper post-treatment care regardless of whether it is a surgical procedure or a non-surgical aesthetic treatment.

The patent's experience of their journey through your practice is shaped by effective post-treatment care which influences recovery while allowing for early detection of potential complications. Maintaining close contact with patients after their procedure allows the practice to address any concerns, start interventions when needed, and reduces anxiety to achieve better outcomes.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS EARLY

A successful post-treatment experience starts long before the patient leaves your office after a procedure. Setting clear expectations about what the recovery process will look like is key. Take the example of a patient undergoing a rhinoplasty. If they aren't told to expect significant swelling for the first few weeks, they might be alarmed when it happens. But if they are informed ahead of time, they can anticipate the healing process, which can reduce anxiety and set a more positive tone.

During consultations, make sure to discuss what the recovery period will look like. Whether it's swelling, bruising, or temporary discomfort, patients need to know what to expect. You might say, "It's normal for your face to feel swollen for the first 2–3 days, and you'll likely notice some bruising. But don't worry, this is a typical part of the healing process, and it will improve over time."

COMPREHENSIVE AFTERCARE PLANS

Every procedure should come with a comprehensive aftercare plan, tailored to the specifics of the treatment. For example, after a facelift, your aftercare instructions might include tips like elevating the head while sleeping to reduce swelling, applying cold compresses, or avoiding direct sun exposure. These steps can dramatically speed up recovery and improve results.

Here are some common aftercare strategies that can be used for a variety of procedures:

- Detailed Instructions: Ensure patients have written and verbal aftercare instructions.
- Regular Follow-Ups: Schedule follow-up appointments before the patients leave their procedure to check in on the patient's healing progress. The practice should internally schedule follow-up calls and SMS messages to check in on the patient as well.
- Patient Support: Offer a direct line of communication for patients to ask questions during recovery. If a patient is unsure whether their healing is on track, they should feel comfortable reaching out. For example, one practice I worked with implemented a "text us anytime" policy with a designated phone line for post-treatment concerns, which reassured patients and minimized their anxiety.

THE LASTING IMPACT OF POST-TREATMENT CARE

Post-treatment care is an essential part of the patient experience that shouldn't be overlooked. By maintaining clear communication, setting realistic expectations, and offering ongoing support, you create a positive, lasting impression that can significantly enhance patient satisfaction and loyalty. When patients feel cared for not only during their procedure but throughout their entire journey with your practice, they are more likely to return for future treatments and recommend your practice to others.

Ultimately, excellent post-treatment care isn't just about healing—it's about building long-term relationships with your patients and showing them that their well-being is your top priority. By investing in a comprehensive aftercare plan and fostering a culture of support, you can ensure your patients feel valued, heard, and confident in their results. The more effort you put into nurturing the post-treatment experience, the more you will reap the rewards in patient retention and referrals.

Davina has worked in the aesthetic industry for over 20 years as an aesthetic injector, med spa manager, and practice manager for plastic surgery and other specialty practices. She intimately understands plastic surgery and med spa operations, personnel management, skin care and injectable sales techniques, and vendor relations. Davina's forte is in coaching aesthetic providers on how to develop comprehensive annual aesthetic treatment plans, a proven technique for successfully building and maintaining patient retention.

Davina@acgpracticepartners.com