

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

*Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery*

## **Wounds - Swelling**

One of the body's least understood processes is swelling and bruising in response to injury. If someone punched you in the eye you would develop a swollen black eye. It would take a day or two before it looked really bad. The injury process takes days to develop. It takes even longer to subside.

Burn injuries may be the worst. A burn of the hand will make the whole arm swell up. A burn of the hand and one leg will cause the whole body to swell. This shows you that what appears to be a small injury involves much more of the body's systems.

The location of the injured area effects the body in different ways. A simple mole taken off the left forehead area will cause swelling and some bruising in the upper eyelid. If your blood is thin then there will be more swelling and bruising. In the normal, younger individual the bruise always moves towards the heart. For that forehead surgery the edema and discoloration will move into the eyelid area. It then moves to the temple and cheek area. Later the neck and even the chest may get bruised looking. Discoloration will move up a leg from an injured foot.

Nasal surgery frequently results in raccoon eyes. This moves into the cheeks, the neck and finally into the chest area as it dissipates.

Another principal is that more injury will cause more swelling. A patient will come to see me for a face lift after having first seen some other plastic surgeon. They tell me the other doctor told them there will be little swelling. If a minimal procedure is done then there will be minimal swelling. If a more extensive procedure is performed then there will be more extensive swelling. There is no way around this. If there was a pill that we could give people to prevent swelling and bruising then I would give it to every patient. If I invented such a pill I could retire right now.

Although most bruising and edema subsides in the first few weeks after injury the last bit of the process may take many months to resolve. A year or more may be required. Even though you look very good a month after your facelift we still wait up to a year to take the "after" pictures. That is when most patients look their best.

The swelling in that bad leg injury that required two corrective surgical procedures may take years to recover. In some cases the edema and discoloration may lessen over time but never go away completely. The doctor cannot predict the final outcome. In general however, the smaller the procedure the minimal the swelling and bruising. With added health problems, thinner blood and advanced age all things take even more time.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.  
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**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

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