



POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Middle Ear Surgery

This sheet explains about post operative care for the patient having surgery on the middle ear. Please read these instructions carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, either before or following the surgery, please call the office at 540-347-0505.

The post operative patient will be discharged from the Outpatient Department of the hospital, after he/she is fully awake and the danger of serious bleeding is over. The patient may be drowsy and nauseated. You may wish to bring a container in the car, in case car motion causes the patient to become sick enroute home. Upon arrival, please allow the patient to rest as much as possible.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER MIDDLE EAR SURGERY

1. **Discomfort After Surgery** -- The amount of discomfort varies depending upon the individual and the extent of the surgery. Most likely there will be a pressure dressing in place and removal of this by the physician at the first office visit following surgery frequently reduces the pain and discomfort. Use the pain medication that has been prescribed for you. If this does not make you comfortable, try adding the Phenergan that was prescribed. If this still gives only minimal relief, please contact us. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN**, or any products containing aspirin, as this can increase bleeding.

2. **Dressings and Ear Packs** -- A pressure bandage will be in place over the outer ear, accompanied by packing in the ear canal, following surgery. The bandage will be removed at the first office visit after surgery. You will need to observe the outer dressing for drainage and notify the doctor if it appears and the area of drainage on the dressing continues to enlarge. The ear packs remain in place for several weeks after surgery. However, once the pressure dressing is removed a small piece of cotton with bacitracin ointment applied at the canal entrance will keep the pack clean. This cotton can be changed as necessary, but do not remove any of the packing.

3. **Diet and Activity** -- A normal diet may be resumed as soon as the patient feels like eating. Please check with the doctor as to when the patient may return to work or school. Showering with a protective shower cap is allowed until the dressing and sutures are removed. After removal of the dressing and sutures the hair may be washed with ear plugs in place. Avoid situations likely to cause a sudden change in pressure, such as airplanes, underground trains, or driving into the mountains. If you need to sneeze, do so with your mouth open to decrease pressure in the ear. Avoid violent nose blowing, by gently blowing one side at a time. Avoid situations where you will be exposed to large crowds, which would increase your exposure to colds. No water sports until cleared by our office.

4. **Fever** -- A temperature of 101 to 101.5 for up to a week is not unusual following surgery. It should come down in response to the Tylenol in the pain medication. Notify us if it does go higher.

5. **Dizziness (vertigo)** -- Episodes of vertigo are not uncommon following surgery. It will gradually decrease as activities are increased. Avoiding sudden head movements and forward bending help to minimize vertigo. Do not drive if you are experiencing episodes of vertigo.

6. **Medications** -- At the pre-operative visit, prescriptions will be given. These are to be filled at your convenience for use after the surgery. Medications include an antibiotic to prevent infection, a pain pill for discomfort, and one to ease nausea. We ask that you give these as directed.

7. **Hearing** -- Although surgery will often improve hearing, it may not be perceptible immediately, especially while the packing is in place. Please be patient. When communicating with the patient following middle ear surgery be aware that when he/she is turns on the surgical side, they may not hear you. The patient may also want the television and radio at a slightly higher volume. Once the ear is healed, a postoperative hearing test will be done.

8. **Return Appointment** -- A post operative appointment will be scheduled for about one or two days after the surgery. This gives the surgeon the opportunity to assess the surgical site and assure you that the healing process is proceeding normally. Recheck appointments will be scheduled at intervals following the first visit. It is important to keep all of these appointments.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Severe neck stiffness** -- cannot touch chin to chest & is accompanied by fever, extreme fatigue, and marked headache.
2. **Fever** over 101.5 degrees.
3. **Inability to** -- smile, wrinkle nose, close eye tight or raise eyebrow on side of the face that surgery was performed. Also, if the patient is unable to keep down any food or fluids.
4. **Increased Anxiety** or changes in behavior.
5. **Drainage** -- on to outer dressing progressively increasing.