



For questions or emergency care, please contact us at 985-327-5905.

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS **Ear Canal, Middle Ear or Mastoid Surgery**

Taking Care of the Ear

- Do *NOT* manipulate or pull-out any packing in the ear canal.
- Prevent water from entering the ear for about two months when washing your or your relative's hair by placing cotton saturated with Vaseline in the outer ear opening. Cotton in the outer ear opening may be changed as needed during the first few days to absorb drainage, but do not attempt to clean or remove any packing from inside the ear canal.
- Absorbable stitches, if present, do not require removal. They will usually dissolve within five to seven days. If stitches are not covered with tape, apply an antibiotic ointment 2-3 times a day for two weeks.

Ear drops: Use as directed. Your surgeon will advise if you should begin using drops immediately after surgery or not. Sometimes drops may not be used until after your follow up visit (7-14 days later). When using drops, replace cotton ball after every application.

Ear Cup Dressing: If an "ear-cup" dressing was used, it can be removed the morning after surgery. If it is not uncomfortable, it should be worn at night for a week to keep from lying on the ear. Swimming is not allowed until approved by your surgeon.

Dealing with Pain: Mild intermittent pain may occur during the first two weeks, particularly above or in the ear, when chewing. If the skin around the surgical area is sensitive, it may be covered with several fluffed-up gauze pads for cushioning. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or the prescribed narcotic pain medicine can be used as directed. Ibuprofen products (Motrin, Advil) are avoided because they can increase the chance of bleeding. A stronger pain medication may be prescribed if mastoid surgery was performed.

Things Not to Worry About

- A hoarse or abnormal voice may occur for several days from the anesthesia tube.
- Numbness of the skin around the surgical incision is common, and should gradually subside within several days or weeks.
- Popping or clicking sounds may be heard, along with a feeling of fullness or liquid in the ear; these will resolve gradually as the healing process continues.
- A mild degree of dizziness may be present on head motion, and is not of concern unless it increases.
- Hearing may be temporarily worse after surgery because of swelling of the ear tissues and packing in the ear canal; improvement occurs over several months.
- Taste disturbance and mouth dryness may occur for a few weeks.

When to Call the Doctor:

- Discharge from the ear lasts longer than seven days, or shows signs of infection - yellow color, foul odor, or high fever
- Packing or material from inside the ear canal occasionally falls out (don't panic)
- If the skin around the sutures becomes swollen, red, or very tender. *Redness of the incision itself is normal.*
- If stitches break or the incision begins to open up.
- If you seem to be getting worse as the days go by.

The doctor will arrange a postoperative visit to check the healing process and remove sutures, if necessary.

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