

## Post-operative Instructions for

### Stapedectomy

**Rest:** Plan to rest the evening after your operation. Even after minor surgery, you may feel drowsy or tired for a number of hours. You may also have fatigue, muscle aches and a sore throat for 1-2 days.

**Nausea and Vomiting:** It is common to have 2-3 episodes of nausea and vomiting. If it persists through the night, call the office in the morning, especially if the nausea is associated with a sensation of spinning or vertigo.

**Temperature:** Generally the body temperature does not raise much above 100 degrees following ear surgery. A slight rise is to be expected. It can be normal to have a low-grade fever for up to a week after surgery. Report any persistent temperature above 101.5 degrees 1 hour after Tylenol or pain medication is given.

**Discomfort and Pain:** Use the pain medication prescribed by your doctor as directed if needed. However, when your pain begins to lessen, try to reduce your pain medication use. The faster you come off your prescription pain medication the more rapid will be your recovery. Tylenol is encouraged for mild to moderate pain, and has fewer risks than narcotic medication.

**Constipation:** PATIENTS MAY EXPERIENCE CONSTIPATION WHILE TAKING NARCOTICS AND EATING A LOW FIBER DIET. PLEASE TRY TO MINIMIZE NARCOTICS. TRY TO EAT SOME SOFT FOODS WITH FIBER: E.G. APPLE SAUCE, BANANAS and BERRIES. ONE CAN BLEND SOME FRUITS WITH ICE FOR A COOL "SMOOTHIE" DRINK.

**Bleeding / Drainage:** A thin bloody discharge can be expected from the ear canal for several days. If it becomes thick yellow or green, please call our office. A piece of cotton should be used to absorb the drainage and can be changed as necessary. You may have a round sponge (otowick) in your ear canal, which will usually be removed at your first postoperative visit. If it comes out sooner, that is usually not a problem. Always wash your hands before treating your ear. When the drainage stops, the ear should be exposed to the air as much as possible.

You may be given a prescription for ear drops to use as directed, sometimes for up to 2 weeks. Otherwise, the operated ear should be kept dry.

**Fluids and Diet:** Drink fluids throughout the day. You may want to use gum or hard candy to moisten the mouth and encourage swallowing. You may resume regular diet as tolerated.

**Sense of Balance:** Your sense of balance, ambulation or mobility may be affected for a few days, occasionally for a week or more. Dizziness with or without nausea and vomiting are common immediately after ear surgery. Call the office if it continues for more than seven (7) days, sooner if severe vertigo, nausea, or facial weakness. Dizziness may be more prominent and persists somewhat longer after stapedectomy.

**Hearing:** Absorbable packing may be present and decreased hearing may persist for one or two months. Hearing should be restored after healing is complete, generally a month or more after surgery.

**Activities:** No straining, heavy lifting or strenuous activities, particularly after stapedectomy, until the doctor gives permission to resume usual activities. Avoid contact sports until authorized by your physician. Some activities, i.e. scuba diving or playing soccer, may be limited for an extended time.

**Other Instructions:**

- Water should be kept out of the ear canal for one month or until the doctor gives permission.
- Do not lie on the side of surgery until this is authorized by your physician.
- Do not blow your nose vigorously for one month after surgery. If you sneeze, do so with your mouth open. If a PE tube has been placed, this restriction may not be necessary.
- Clean the suture area only if instructed by your doctor. You may wash your hair the next day provided water is kept out of the ear.
- If you have incisions closed with staples, you may wash and keep the incision clean, apply antibiotic ointment twice daily or as directed. Staples are typically removed in one week, usually with minimal discomfort. After 24 hours, a dressing over the incision is usually not required. A small amount of skin redness, irritation, discomfort and itching can be expected during the healing process.
- You may be instructed to remove a wrap-around dressing 24-48 hours after surgery if this was utilized, i.e. after mastoid surgery.

**Other Questions:** For non-emergent questions, please call our office, **503-581-1567**, between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. For emergent questions, call our office and our answering service will page the doctor on call. We have a doctor on call 7 days a week.