

Outpatient Craniotomy

Instructions for patients recovering after surgery

Read this pamphlet to learn about:

- How to take care of yourself after surgery
- How to care for your incision
- How to manage your pain
- What activities are safe
- What to do in case of emergency
- When to see the surgeon for a follow-up visit



You have had an anesthetic or narcotic medicine.

- Do not drive a car or drink alcohol for 24 hours.
- Have an adult stay with you overnight.



What can I eat and drink after surgery?

- You can go back to eating and drinking what you normally would.
- Start slowly by having fluids and soups on the day of the surgery. Then return to your normal meals the next day.
- If you feel nauseated (sick to your stomach) or you are vomiting, you can get anti-nausea medicine such as Gravol. You can buy it from your pharmacy without a prescription.
- Take the anti-nausea medication as directed and continue drinking liquids until the nausea passes. Then slowly start to eat what you usually eat.

How much activity is safe?

- Go home and rest on the first day.
- You can do light activities 24 hours after your surgery. You can start by walking around your home. Then gradually increase your activities.
- You may feel lightheaded or have a mild headache. This is normal and should go away.
- Your surgeon will tell you when you can go back to work and sports.

How do I take care of my dressing and wound?

- Keep the dressing (bandage) and incision (cut) clean and dry at all times.
- Do not wet your head for **5 days**.
- Keep your head dressing on for 5 days, then remove it and DO NOT put a dressing back on.
- Make an appointment to see your family doctor in 10 to 14 days to have your staples or sutures removed.
- The nurse in the day surgery unit will give you a staple removal kit. Take this to your family doctor when it is time to have them removed.

- You may have some bruising, swelling or even a little wetness of the wound. This is normal and will get better with time.
- If your surgeon has arranged Homecare, it will begin as planned by your Homecare nurse.

When can I bathe or shower?

- You may bathe or shower after 24 hours. **But do not wet your head.**
- Keep the incision clean and dry.
- You may wet your head after 5 days. After you shower, gently pat your head dry.

How do I manage my pain?

- It is normal to have some pain after this surgery. The pain should get better with time.
- If you are given a prescription, take it to a pharmacy to get it filled and follow the directions for taking the medicine.
- A mild headache is normal. You can take Tylenol Extra Strength every, if needed. Follow the directions on the bottle.

What if I am constipated?

Some pain medicines can make you constipated. To prevent constipation:

- ✓ Drink 3 to 5 glasses of water every day. Each glass should be about 8 ounces.
- ✓ Eat foods that are high in fibre such as whole grains, bran, fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ If you have not had a bowel movement for 72 hours, take Milk of Magnesia. You can buy it from your pharmacy without a prescription. Follow the directions on the bottle.

Other medications

Continue with all the medications you were on before your surgery (such as Decadron, Dilantin).

If you were given a prescription, take it to get filled at a pharmacy and take the medications as instructed by the pharmacist.



Problems to watch for

Call your surgeon or your family doctor or come to the Toronto Western Hospital Emergency Department if any of the problems below happen to you. If you are from out of town, go to the nearest hospital emergency department:

- A decreased level of consciousness
- Severe headache not helped by Tylenol
- Continuous vomiting
- Seizures

My follow-up visit

Call Dr. Bernstein's office at 416 603 6499 to make an appointment 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery.

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