

Instructions for Cochlear Implant Recipients

Getting Started

To make your surgical procedure and recovery go smoothly, it's important to be prepared. You will receive a call from a nurse to confirm the time and date of your procedure, review your medical history and provide you with eating/drinking, medication and bathing instructions for the day of surgery. You may also receive a call from an anesthesiologist the night before your appointment.

Important Instructions for the Night Before Surgery

Unless otherwise directed by the nurse or doctor, please make sure you take a shower or bath the night before surgery. Use shampoo and soap only; avoid conditioner, hair products, lotions or deodorants. Follow the specific instructions provided by the nurse or physician regarding eating/drinking times, medications and bathing instructions. To make sure you have an empty stomach, please follow these guidelines:

- No solid food or milk after midnight.
- Clear liquids can be taken up to four hours before surgery. If you cannot see through the liquid, it is not clear. The only approved liquids are clear apple juice, Pedialyte, 7-Up or water.
- Please do not drink red liquids.
- Absolutely nothing in the mouth, not even chewing gum or hard candy, for four hours before surgery.

Day of Surgery

Depending on the surgery, patients are asked to arrive one hour or one and a half hours before the surgery's scheduled start to allow time for the registration process and preparation.

Please bring your insurance information, identification and payments required. Please do not bring any jewelry or valuables.

Please check in at the registration desk located in the lobby. A registration clerk will help you with your paperwork. Give the receptionist any completed History and Physical form filled out by your primary care provider or surgeon that should have been completed within the last 24 hours. You or your caretaker must remain in the surgery center during the patient's procedure. It is surgical center policy to ask all post-pubescent females to provide a urine sample upon check-in.

Anesthesia

The anesthesiologist will help you go to sleep in the anesthesia room or operating room. The anesthesiologist will decide on the safest way to accomplish this. Most people go to sleep by first breathing into a mask of oxygen. After filling the lungs with oxygen, anesthesia begins with medication through the IV. Modern anesthesia is fast and comfortable. During the operation, an anesthesiologist will monitor you carefully to make sure there is no pain.

In the Recovery Room

After the operation, you will be taken into the recovery room. A maximum of two adult visitors are allowed in the recovery room. Children are not allowed in the recovery room; please bring an adult to supervise them while they wait in the waiting room.

During this time, the recovery nurse will go over specific discharge instructions. People vary in their reactions to anesthesia. Many patients wake up groggy but comfortable. Others may wake up confused and disoriented. The recovery room nurse will closely monitor you during this time to keep you as peaceful and comfortable as possible.

After the Surgery

After the surgery, you will wear a dressing over the ear. Keep this on for five days—if it comes loose, use the Velcro strap to retighten. If the dressing falls off and becomes contaminated, do not try to replace it. You can expect some drainage onto the gauze.

Keep the incision behind the ear dry for a period of 10 days. You may bathe, but avoid getting your hair wet. You may use dry shampoo, which is available at most pharmacies or can be purchased at most beauty supply stores.

Do not remove the tape behind the ear. It will peel off on its own, usually within two to three weeks. The tape will be stained with blood; this is normal. It is also normal for blood to drain into the nose or throat, or be visible in spit or saliva. Do not clean in or around the ear, as you may contaminate the incision with water. This could lead to infection. Do not pick or touch the area of the incision.

Make sure you refrain from anything other than light activity for two weeks after surgery. Do not lift anything greater than five pounds and avoid bending. After your postoperative visit, you will likely be cleared to resume normal activity. Please contact the clinic to confirm this appointment. Do not use a CPAP for one week after surgery. No special diet is required after surgery. Please take or administer medications as directed. Please call (408) 227-6300 for questions or concerns. If you call after hours or during weekends, an operator will answer the phone. The doctor on call can answer general questions. If you have a question specifically regarding the implant, please ask to be connected directly to Dr. Murray. If you are experiencing an emergency, please call 911 or proceed directly to the emergency room. Please see the vaccination guidelines below. Additional instructions will be provided at the follow-up appointment.

Cochlear Implants & Meningitis Risks

People with cochlear implants have an increased risk of developing bacterial meningitis. Due to the higher risk, these patients should make sure they are up to date on their pneumococcal vaccinations. Recommendations vary with age and vaccination history; we are happy to discuss this with you in detail.