

General Ear Surgery Post-Operative Care Instructions

Dressing Care:

If you or your child's ear has a plastic cup dressing with Velcro straps containing gauze, the surgeon has placed this over your ear to absorb drainage. This dressing can be adjusted as needed for comfort. Please leave it on for five days. It may then be removed and disposed of, unless instructed otherwise. If you or your child has a cotton ball in the ear canal, please do not remove it. If the cotton ball becomes soaked with blood, you can put a bandage over your ear and change it as needed.

Incision:

After your surgery, the incision (stitches) needs to stay dry for 10 days. There will be steri-strips (tape) over the incision, which will take one to two weeks to start loosening from the skin. Keep the tape on the skin until it is very loose. Protect the incision. Do not get the incision wet. Your stitches, which are under the skin, will slowly dissolve over the next several weeks.

It is not unusual to experience some moderate swelling around your incision. Frequently, patients report more swelling first thing in the morning, with the swelling diminishing over the course of the day. Monitor the incision site daily for signs of increased and persistent swelling or infection.

DO NOT:

- Bend or lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk
- Sneeze – if you must sneeze, do so with your mouth open
- Blow nose – if you must blow your nose, do it very gently and slowly
- Clean anywhere near the incision – you might make a mistake and get the incision wet, which may cause infection

You may resume the above actions once your surgeon has medically cleared you to do so

Please contact your surgeon if you experience:

- Noisy breathing or difficulty breathing
- Ear drainage that has a foul smell
- Persistent vomiting
- Fever above 101° F (38.4° C)
- Pain is not relieved by your pain medication
- Increased swelling, redness or drainage coming from in or around the ear

If you need to speak to a surgeon urgently, please call (408) 227-6300. After hours, you will be connected with the on-call ENT who will instruct you further.

Additional questions you may have:

Should I change what I eat after surgery?

Your diet should remain the same as it was prior to surgery. No special food restrictions are necessary after ear surgery.

When can I fly on an airplane?

You are cleared to fly on an airplane three weeks following ear surgery.

When can I return to work/when can my child return to school?

Typically adults will return to work when they feel comfortable – about two to three days following surgery. Typically children will remain out of school until their bandage comes off – about five days.

When can I go back to the gym/when can my child resume physical activity (e.g. P.E., dance)?

Three to four weeks.

My ear feels plugged. Is that normal?

The “plugged” ear feeling is normal and will last four to five weeks.

When can I (or my child) go swimming?

Typically, one to two months after surgery, once the surgeon clears you.

Can I sleep on the ear that had the surgical procedure?

Yes, you can sleep on the ear if you’re comfortable doing so.

When can I resume taking medications that were discontinued prior to surgery?

You can resume the same day of your surgery. If you take blood thinners or aspirin, ask your surgeon when to resume.

If you have additional questions, please call (408) 227-6300.