



Han G. Sohn
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Post-Operative Care and Instructions for Tympanoplasty

There are many questions that may arise after your ear surgery. These instructions are designed to prepare you for what to expect after surgery and should answer most of your questions. If you have any additional questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Swelling

Swelling is normal after surgery. If an incision was made behind the ear, the ear may appear to stick out from the side of the head more than the opposite ear. This is the result of post operative swelling and it should decrease over a period of several weeks. It may also be noticed that there is some numbness over the top of the ear after the bandage have been removed. This is the result of bruising of the sensory nerves to the ear as a result of the incision. This numbness will gradually subside over a period of several months.

Bleeding

There may be occasional mild bleeding from the incision behind the ear. This is usually of no concern. If there is some drainage from the incision site, a small piece of gauze can be taped behind the ear in order to collect the drainage. If the bleeding is of concern, you should call the office. After the surgery is complete, the ear canal may be packed with an absorbable material. As this material liquefies, it usually results in a bloody drainage from the ear canal. It is wise to keep a clean piece of cotton in the ear in order to collect the drainage.

Pain

There is usually only mild pain following surgery. Some discomfort may be felt for the first 24 hours if a pressure dressing is applied to the ear. Once this is removed, however, most discomfort subsides. There may be occasional brief, stabbing pain in the ear up to one week after surgery. Analgesics will be prescribed if they are necessary. These should be taken only when needed. Tylenol is fine if the pain is not severe.

Cleaning the Ear

Any dried blood in the outer ear may be gently cleaned with a Q-tip and hydrogen peroxide. The incision behind the ear should be cleaned twice a day with a Q-tip and hydrogen peroxide.

Temperature

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Generally the body temperature does not rise much above 100 degrees following ear surgery. Temperatures >101.5 should be reported to the office.

Weakness

It is not unusual after a person has had an anesthetic, or any type of operation, for them to feel weak or become lightheaded. This gradually subsides in several days with medication.

Dizziness

The hearing organ and balance organ are all part of the same system. Both organs are very delicate and, therefore, may be off set after surgery. Occasionally, a patient may experience dizziness for several days after surgery. This is especially true in the case of stapedectomy operations and reconstruction of the ossicular chain. Such dizziness usually subsides within several days. If the dizziness recurs and becomes increasingly severe, please notify our office.

Hearing

Generally, hearing cannot be evaluated for six weeks after surgery. This is because of the fact that the middle ear becomes swollen and fills with blood as a result of the surgical procedure. Also, the entire ear canal is filled with packing material. It takes approximately six weeks for the blood and packing material to resorb. You may begin to notice occasional popping of the ear several weeks after surgery. This is the result of resorption of the blood and entrance of air into the middle ear cavity. It is a normal part of the healing process.

Resuming Activities

It is advisable to sleep with the head of the bed elevated for the first week after surgery. This helps to minimize swelling behind the ear and in the middle ear cavity. The head of the bed may be elevated by sleeping on two or three pillows or by placing several pillows under the mattress. After the first week, you may sleep without the head of the bed elevated. You should avoid all activities that may increase blood pressure in the head area. Therefore, avoid bending over and lifting heavy objects for at least two weeks after surgery. You should not blow your nose for 3 weeks. Try to avoid sneezing for the first several weeks post-operatively. If you must sneeze, let it come out of the mouth like a cough. Excessive coughing should also be avoided. You should avoid the gym or strenuous athletic activity for one month after surgery. Swimming, diving, and water skiing should be avoided for two months after surgery. Eyeglasses may be worn as soon as the surgical dressing is removed. However, if there is an incision behind the ear, a band aid should be placed along the top of the ear to keep the rims of the glasses from rubbing against the suture line. Contact lenses may be inserted the day after surgery. Tub baths or showering can be resumed as soon as the patient feels strong enough to do so. The hair may

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be washed with someone's help. It is essential, however, that the ear canal be kept completely dry. This may be accomplished by placing cotton coated with Vaseline into the ear canal opening. Care must be used with hair dryers since the top of ear may be numb and could be injured if care is not taken.

Returning to Work or School

The average patient is usually able to return to school or work one to two weeks following surgery. Return to work or school is dependent upon the amount of physical activity involved. Following simple tympanoplasty most patients may return to their school activities in a few days to a week.

Medications When discharged from the hospital/clinic, you will be given several prescriptions. One prescription may be an antibiotic which should be taken as directed until it is completely gone. A second prescription will be for pain which need not be filled unless you need it. Please do not hesitate to call our office with any questions or concerns.

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