

Postoperative Middle Ear Surgery (Adult) Instructions

Dr. Healy - Dr. Keele - Dr. Tubbs - Dr. Ramsey

Contact Information:

- **Glacier Ear Nose and Throat - (406) 752-8330**
 - 9am to 5pm, Monday-Friday
 - After 5 pm and weekends, an "on call" provider is available.
- **The HealthCenter - (406) 751-7550**

When should I call my doctor?

- If I am worried, my doctor is worried! I will call my doctor's office.
- If I have signs of an infection, like a fever above 101.5 degrees, drainage that turns to puss, redness or swelling around incisions or increasing pain in my ear, I will call my doctor.
- If I have a severe headache or stiff neck, I will call my doctor.
- If drainage from my ear soaks more than 12 cotton balls per day or if there is clear drainage from my nose, I will call my doctor.

What should I expect after surgery?

- It is normal to have some blood or clear fluid draining from my ear.
- My ear may drain for 2 weeks, sometimes longer.
- I may have a dry mouth or not taste things normally for a few weeks.
- I may have popping sounds in my ear, and other noises for several weeks.
- My ear and around the ear may be numb.
- I may have a stiff or sore jaw for 1 to 2 months.
- I may be dizzy for about a week.
- I will have decreased hearing out of my ear after surgery and it may get worse for a few weeks.

When will I see my doctor?

- I need to have a follow-up appointment with the doctor in 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.

What about my pain?

- I will have some discomfort.
- I may use ice packs to my face to help with swelling and pain.
- I may use over the counter Ibuprofen or Tylenol.
- I may be given a prescription for narcotic pain medication if Ibuprofen and Tylenol is not enough.
 - I will not take extra Tylenol if I am taking Norco, Lortab or Percocet because they have Tylenol in it.
 - I will not drive if I am taking narcotic pain medication.
 - Narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. I will drink extra fluids and I may need a stool softener.
- I will follow pain medication instructions given by my nurse or pharmacist.

How do I care for my surgical site?

- I will use the prescribed ear drops as instructed until the doctor says to stop.
 - I will call the doctor's office to refill the ear drops 1-2 days before running out.
- I may remove the dressing after 1 or 2 days and may then use a cotton ball in the outer ear for drainage.
- I will not remove the packing inside of the ear, but some packing may come out when I change the cotton ball.
- I will not put Q-tips or anything deep in my ear.
- I may have incisions around the ear canal or behind the ear:
 - My incisions may develop crusted blood or the cotton balls may stick.
 - I may clean the incisions with diluted hydrogen peroxide and put a thin coat of Vaseline or antibiotic ointment (like Bacitracin) on 2 times a day.
- I will not wash my hair for 2 days. I may take a tub bath during this time.
- I will protect my ear from the chance of water getting in it by placing a cotton ball in the outer ear and covering it with Vaseline to seal it until my doctor says I no longer need to protect it.

What about activity?

- I will sleep with my head elevated on pillows or in a recliner for 2 - 3 days after surgery.
- I will not blow my nose, sniff forcefully, or pop my ears until the doctor says it is ok.
- I will avoid anybody with a cold.
- I will avoid straining, bending or quick head movements that may cause dizziness.
- I may not fly, swim or dive until the doctor says that I can.

