

Post-Operative Instructions Stapedotomy Surgery

Care of the ear after surgery

Keyhole (Endoscopic) Approach:

All surgery was performed through your ear canal. There may have been a small fat graft harvest from your earlobe with a dissolving suture. Often there are no external wounds at all.

The ear canal will have packing within it, which is dissolvable. The outer ear will have a cotton ball which usually remains in place without the need for any tape.

Every day you should remove the cotton ball, and then instil a few antibiotic ear drops into the ear canal. This can go onto any packing seen inside the canal. Then place a fresh new cotton ball into the outer ear. Continue this for 1 week after your surgery.

Dizziness

Most patients will stay overnight in hospital. You will **lie flat for 2 hours after your surgery** has finished, following which you can sit up in bed and have something to eat. It is preferable to remain on **bed-rest for the remainder of the day**, but you can get up to go to the toilet. When you do this, ask for a nurse to be present on the first occasion in case you are unsteady on your feet. Dizziness is usually short-lived and by the following morning you should be well enough to go home. At home you should still take things easy, not overexerting yourself or lifting anything heavy.

Fatigue

The general anaesthetic, surgery and medications may cause you to feel fatigued.

Pain

Generally, there is only minimal post-operative pain. Simple painkillers (analgesia) are usually all that is required but the anaesthetist will ensure that you have stronger painkillers if needed.

Showering & Hair washing

Keyhole (Endoscopic) Approach: Can wash hair from **day 1**

Protecting the ear canal during showering:

NO WATER should enter the ear canal until the ear canal and eardrum are totally healed, which is usually 2-4 weeks, but you should wait until Dr. Saxby tells you it is ok to get it wet.

To keep the inside of the ear dry, replace the dry cotton ball with one that has been smeared all over with Vaseline. (Vaseline entry into the canal will not cause any problems at all). After your shower, you can throw away the Vaseline cotton ball and replace with a fresh dry one. Do not use earplugs or re-useable plugs due to the risk of infection.

Exercise

Avoid strenuous exercise, golf, weights, gym, etc. for 2 weeks after surgery to avoid any bleeding. There must be no water sports until the ear is completely healed.

Flying

It is best not to arrange any flights for at least 6 weeks after your surgery. Discuss this with your surgeon if there is an urgent or essential flight required. The reason is that flights involve pressure changes that could jeopardise your eardrum reconstruction.

Fluids and oral intake

It is important to stay well hydrated in the post-operative period. A normal diet can be taken.

Bleeding

In the event of significant bleeding (generally anything over a teaspoon or continuous oozing) please seek urgent medical assistance, either by contacting the rooms or attending the nearest hospital with an emergency department. This is a very rare occurrence.

Slight blood staining on the cotton ball is common and not of concern. For minor bleeding of this nature, simply replace with a fresh cotton ball as necessary. Let the surgeon know if this does not settle down.

Post Operative Timetable:

3 weeks First post op review. Packing will be removed from ear canal. There will still not be any significant hearing change as the new eardrum will still be healing and there will be additional dissolvable packing material in the middle ear, plus blood, fluid etc all of which will impede normal hearing.

6 weeks Second post op review. Usually the skin has now completely healed and you may be permitted to resume water activities, but check with your surgeon. Some hearing may start to be appreciated, but it should still improve with further healing.

10 weeks Post operative audiogram. Further follow up will have been organised based on how the ear is healing in between weeks 6-10.