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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

STAPEDECTOMY/STAPEDOTOMY/MIDDLE EAR EXPLORATION

This Instruction Sheet is designed to help you care for your ear following surgery, and to answer many of the commonly-asked questions. Please read it carefully.

Should any emergency questions arise, Dr. Chandrasekhar or her covering doctor is available 24 hours per day and can be reached through the answering service at 212-249-3232.

LEAVING THE HOSPITAL

1. Your first postoperative appointment should be one week after surgery. Please call the office after 9 am on the next business day after your surgery to schedule the appointment, if it hasn't been made preoperatively for you.
2. The prescriptions that you receive should be filled. The antibiotic should be taken at regular intervals as directed on the bottle. The patch to prevent vertigo and dizziness should be placed on a clean, dry area of your skin and may be left on for 3 days. If there is dizziness after the first patch is removed, a second patch may be worn for another 3 days. The pain medication and the pills for nausea or dizziness should be taken as needed, as directed on the bottle. Side effects of the dizziness and pain medications include drowsiness, blurry vision, dry mouth, and constipation.

THE NIGHT AFTER SURGERY

- It is advisable to sleep with your head slightly elevated on one or two pillows, keeping pressure off of the operated ear. This will help reduce any postoperative swelling.
- You should limit your dietary intake on the day that you've had surgery to clear liquids and bland soft solids. It is advisable to drink plenty of water after surgery.

THE DAY AFTER SURGERY

Remove the Band-Aids over the ear 24 hours after surgery is over. There is some cotton over the ear canal; that should be removed and replaced with a fresh, clean cotton ball (it does not have to be sterile). There is packing in the ear canal which should be left in place. It may appear red or blood-tinged. It is nothing to worry about. The lobule (bottom part of the ear) may look bruised if there has been a fat graft taken from there. The entire ear and side of head must be kept dry.

PRECAUTIONS

1. DO NOT blow your nose. Any accumulated secretions in the nose may be drawn back into the throat and expectorated if desired. Do your best to avoid catching a cold. DO NOT 'pop' your ears by holding your nose and blowing air through the Eustachian tube into the ear. If it is necessary to sneeze, do so with your mouth open, so as to not increase pressure in the ear.
2. DO NOT allow water to enter the ear until advised by Dr. Chandrasekhar that your ear has healed. During a shower or bath, place a large piece of cotton into the outer ear opening and cover it completely with Vaseline petrolatum jelly.
3. DO NOT do any heavy lifting or aggressive aerobic exercise until advised that it is permissible to do so by Dr. Chandrasekhar.
4. DO NOT have dental work requiring drilling until at least 3 weeks after surgery.
5. AVOID flying for at least one week (and preferably one month) after surgery. When the plane is changing altitude you should remain awake and chew gum or swallow water to stimulate equalization of pressures across the ear.

SENSATIONS THAT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE

1. You should anticipate a certain amount of pulsation, popping, clicking, and other sounds in the ear. Occasional sharp shooting pains or liquid sensation in the ear are not unusual. These are all normal postoperative sensations.
2. Patients often experience dizziness with nausea and vomiting immediately after stapes surgery. Some unsteadiness is common during the first week. Brief dizziness on sudden head motion or in bending over may persist for a few weeks. These symptoms need not concern you unless they increase. You should take the medication for dizziness as needed.
3. Patients sometimes notice a hearing improvement immediately following surgery, but this can fade due to normal swelling of ear tissues and packing in the ear canal and middle ear. By the end of four to six weeks, hearing improvement is usually apparent, but this may take a few months. Maximum hearing improvement is usually attained at four months after surgery.
4. A bloody or watery discharge from the ear may occur during the healing period. The cotton on the outside of the ear should be changed daily. If the discharge is yellow or foul-smelling, please call the office and schedule an urgent appointment to see the doctor at her next office session.
5. Mild, intermittent ear pain, occasionally of a shooting quality, is not unusual during the first two weeks. You should NOT have continual ear pain.

Please feel free to contact the office if there are any questions.

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