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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS COCHLEAR IMPLANT

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. A facial nerve monitor was used during surgery, so you may notice some black-and-blue marks near the corner of the eye or mouth. These are from the monitoring electrodes and will resolve.

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 dressing around your head or on your ear 24 hours after surgery is over. There are some tapes behind your ear covering the incision; these should be left in place. 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. This is particularly important if you develop a cold.
2. 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.
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 read the material from the implant company that you have received, or go to the implant company website for details on the device. Remember that you CANNOT have the following with a cochlear implant in your ear:
 - a. Monopolar cautery
 - b. MRI scan

If there is any question, show this instruction sheet to your doctor.

SENSATIONS THAT YOU MAY EXPERIENCE

1. You should anticipate a certain amount of pulsation, popping, clicking, and other sounds in the ear and also a feeling of fullness in the ear. Occasional sharp shooting pains are not unusual. At times it may feel as if there is liquid or electricity in the ear. These are all normal postoperative sensations.
2. Dizziness may be present immediately after surgery, and then on head motion once you're moving around. This need not concern you unless it increases. You should take the medication for dizziness as needed.
3. You will not be hearing from your cochlear implant until the first programming visit, which will be a few weeks after surgery.
4. If you develop swelling, redness, fever, or severe pain over the surgery site, or severe neck pain or headaches, please call the office for an urgent appointment to see the doctor.
5. Mild, intermittent pain, occasionally of a shooting quality, is not unusual during the first two weeks. With chewing, pain above or in front of the ear is felt, and will resolve over time. You should take the medication for pain as needed.

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

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