

OTOPLASTY

Pre-Operative and Post-Operative Patient Instructions

Pre-Operative Instructions for Otoplasty

SHOPPING LIST

Prescriptions

Submitted to your pharmacy. Your pharmacy should contact you when ready to pick up.

Stool Softener (preferably MiraLAX)

Helps with constipation associated with narcotic pain relievers.

Tylenol (Acetaminophen)

Alternative to narcotic pain medication if pain is not severe. Do NOT take NSAIDS.

NIGHT BEFORE SURGERY

- **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT OR SURGERY WILL BE CANCELLED.** If prescribed, take medications with a small sip of water.
- **Shower:** The night before or morning of surgery. This will help reduce the risk of infection by eliminating bacteria. Arrive the day of the procedure with a clean face. Do not apply any makeup, moisturizers, hair sprays or gels, or nail polish.
- **Set Up Home Recovery Area:** This may include pillows, blankets, books, television, and anything else to assist with a comfortable recovery.
- **Relax:** Stay calm and get plenty of rest to avoid unnecessary stress.

DAY OF SURGERY

- **Dress Comfortably:** Dress in comfortable, clean, and loose-fitting clothes. Shirts that can be buttoned or zipped up are preferred.
- **DO NOT wear** any makeup, jewelry, cosmetic creams, hair products, deodorant, sunscreen, and remove all piercings.
- **No Contact lenses:** Do not wear contact lenses. Remember to bring your glasses to sign necessary paperwork.

Post-Operative Instructions for Otoplasty

NIGHT OF SURGERY

- **Movement is Important:** Make sure you are up and walking around immediately after your surgery. When lying down in bed or on the couch, make sure you are moving your legs and ankles. Take deep breaths frequently to keep your lungs clear.
- **Sleep:** Sleep on your back with your head elevated about 30-40 degrees (2-3 pillows). Do not sleep on your side. Keeping your body more upright will minimize swelling. Continue this for one to two weeks.
- **Dressing:** After surgery, you will be placed in a bulky head dressing that will be under some pressure. Keep this dressing dry. At your post-op day one appointment it will be removed.

MEDICATIONS

- **Pain:** You will be prescribed a pain medication for post-operative pain control. If your discomfort after surgery is not strong you are welcomed to take Tylenol in place of the prescribed medication. Do not take Tylenol with the pain medication, often the medication you are prescribed will have Tylenol in it. **Do not exceed 4,000 mg of Tylenol in any 24-hour period.** Take medication with food to minimize risk of nausea.
- **Nausea:** A common side effect after general anesthesia and strong medications. If you are experiencing nausea, we advise that you take your nausea medication.
- **Constipation:** You will experience constipation if taking narcotic pain relievers. MiraLAX or other over the counter laxatives are recommended. Do not wait to take until you are constipated. Begin treatment with narcotic use.
- **Medications to Avoid:** Take only those medications approved or prescribed by your surgeon. Avoid medications containing aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Naproxen, etc.) for two weeks before and after surgery. These medications may increase bleeding.
- **Substances to Avoid:** Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine, for these will dramatically slow the healing process

NUTRITION

- **Diet:** A light low-fat diet is best after surgery. You may start a regular diet after your surgery if you are not feeling nauseated or vomiting. Avoid eating foods that are difficult to chew while you are healing after surgery.

- **Hydration:** Stay hydrated by drinking 8 -10 glasses of water a day. Avoid alcohol for 48 hours and while you are taking the pain medications.

ACTIVITY

- **Physical Activity:** Normal daily activity may be resumed a few days after surgery. Avoid bending, lifting, or straining for one to two weeks. Be extremely careful if wearing any “pull-over the head” clothing.
- **Exercise:** Light physical activity may be resumed 2-3 weeks after surgery. Remember to start easy and build back up to your previous exercise levels. At 6-8 weeks or when further instructed by Dr. Kulak, more intense exercise can be started. Just know that swelling may transiently be worse with exercise.
- **Glasses:** Be careful when wearing reading glasses or sunglasses for the first two weeks. You do not want them to put too much pressure on the ears or rub against the incision line.
- **Compression Headband:** Expect to wear a compression headband the entire first week, only removing it to clean the incisions. Patients will wear it for a few weeks after or as further instructed by your surgeon. The head garment should fit snug but not so tight that you develop wounds or blisters from the compression. Always wear your garment except for when you are showering or to wash it. This will help with minimizing swelling.
- **Driving:** Do NOT operate a vehicle or make important decisions until you have been off pain medications for 24 hours. Use good judgment.
- **Return to work:** Most patients require approximately 5-7days off work depending on their job responsibilities.

BATHING

- **Showering:** After the dressing is removed, you may shower and wash your hair as usual. Remember to be gentle while incisions heal.
- **Hot Tubs/Baths/Swimming Pools:** No tub baths or jacuzzi until your incisions have healed, and approved by your surgeon, which is usually around 2 weeks. It is best to wait one month for hot tubs, as they tend to have more bacteria than regular chlorinated swimming pools.

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR INCISIONS

- **Incisions:** Gently cleanse the incision line with a cotton swab dipped in hydrogen peroxide and apply antibiotic ointment three times daily.

- **Stitches:** Do not pick at the stitches. Your surgeon will remove all necessary stitches at your post-operative appointment. All the rest will dissolve on their own.
- **Sun Exposure:** Avoid and minimize sun exposure. Use an SPF 30 or greater when outdoors. Even a mild sunburn can worsen swelling, irritate an incision that is healing, and cause permanent scar discoloration.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Drainage:** Drainage can occur from the incision sites for the first week. The drainage will be blood tinged. You may use gauze or a light pad to reinforce post-op dressings if this occurs.
- **Bruising:** You can expect to have bruising. Most bruises will heal after about 2-3 weeks. The bruise will go from a purplish color to a yellow/green shade as it starts to resolve.
- **Swelling:** Swelling is to be expected for weeks and sometimes months. The swelling can improve with intermittent rest and use of the headband. Exercise and physical activity can transiently worsen swelling but is encouraged.
- **Itching:** Itching at the incision sites is normal for a few days. You may take Benadryl to help with this.
- **Pain:** It is normal to experience tightness, pressure, soreness, itchiness, and fatigue for several days to weeks following surgery as you recover.
- **Sensory Changes in Skin:** You may feel numbness at the incision lines and surrounding areas. This is normal and should subside after a few weeks.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS – WHEN TO CALL THE OFFICE (703) 481-0002, OR GO TO THE HOSPITAL

- **Signs of Infection:** Spreading redness, worsening swelling, increased drainage or drainage of pus, worsening pain, warmth at incision site and temperature over 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Difficulty breathing, swallowing, or speaking.**
- **Excessive Bleeding:** Bleeding that persists after applying pressure for 20 minutes.
- **Medication Reactions:** If you develop hives, rashes or itching you may be having a medication allergic reaction.

- **Other Emergency Situations:** Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest pain, lightheadedness that does not quickly resolve, severe vomiting, pain, or asymmetric swelling in your legs.