

POST-OPERATIVE CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SURGERY INVOLVING FACE, HEAD OR NECK

You should have nothing to eat or drink after midnight the night before surgery.

You should not take medications that affect the blood's ability to clot for one week prior to the surgery. Some of these medications include Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin®, Aleve® and all nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs commonly used to treat muscle and joint problems. This list also includes anticoagulation medications such as Coumadin, Warfarin, Heparin, Plavix, Xarelto®, Eliquis® and Pradaxa®. If you are unsure if you can stop taking these medications prior to surgery, contact the physician who placed you on these medications to find out. In addition, consuming alcohol, vitamin E, fish oil and larger amounts of garlic is not advised prior to surgery due to their anticlotting properties.

Activity:

You are not permitted to engage in strenuous activity for a total of seven days after surgery. Strenuous activity includes lifting anything greater than 15 pounds, all vigorous activity and contact sports. After seven days, you may gradually increase your activity. However, do not continue any activity that causes discomfort in the surgical area.

Diet:

A diet of soft foods is advisable at first before progressing to a regular diet. This diet is especially important if the surgery involves the neck since there may be some discomfort when swallowing. Maintenance of adequate fluid intake is essential for proper healing and successful recovery.

Medications:

Your doctor will usually prescribe an antibiotic and pain medication for you to take after surgery. For mild discomfort, you may take Tylenol® and ibuprofen alternately. Take the antibiotic until gone.

Care of the incision site:

Cover the incision site with a dressing or bandage for one week. Vaseline® should be applied to the wound twice a day. A new dressing should be applied daily for one week. When showering, avoid letting the water directly hit the incision. An ice pack over the surgical site is helpful to reduce swelling, bruising and pain. Sitting or sleeping in a recliner or keeping your head elevated will help decrease post-operative swelling, skin discoloration and discomfort. The sutures are absorbable and will dissolve with time. You can expect to experience bloody drainage from the incision site. If bright red bleeding occurs, apply firm, direct pressure.

A post-operative appointment will be scheduled approximately one week after surgery.

Causes for Concern

Any of the following signs and symptoms can be cause for concern; should they occur, notify your ENT physician as soon as possible:

1. Fever of 101.5°F or greater.
2. Severe pain not controllable with the pain medications prescribed.
3. Massive swelling and firmness at the operative site along with purpling, browning or blackening of the skin.
4. Breathing difficulty that is directly attributable to swelling at the operative site.

Follow-up

A post-operative appointment will be scheduled approximately seven days after surgery.