

Neck Surgery Post-Operative Instructions - Parotidectomy/Neck Dissection/Excision of Submandibular gland/ Excision of Neck Mass or Cyst

MEDICATIONS:

Pain medications and occasionally an antibiotic will be given to you after surgery. Be sure to take plenty of liquids with your pain medications, as they may often cause constipation. You may also take over the counter Colace (Docusate), a gentle stool softener, once or twice a day while on narcotic pain medications. Stop this medication if you develop loose stools or diarrhea.

Pain medications can also cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach. Try to take pain medications with some food.

Be sure to take all of your antibiotics if prescribed. Stop the medicine and call the office if you develop any side effects such as nausea, vomiting, swelling or a rash.

DIET:

After surgery it is not uncommon to have some nausea and occasionally vomiting. Eat a bland light meal or a liquid diet on the first day after surgery. Increase to your regular diet as you feel up to it. Patients who have had their parotid removed may have some tenderness to their jaw when chewing, this should gradually improve with time.

INCISION CARE:

Keep the incision site clean and dry. You may shower, but keep your incision dry for 48 hours. Avoid scrubbing at your incision. If you have surgical tape (Steri-strips) on your incision, allow them to fall off gradually. Once they start to peel off, you may gently remove them. If you have a surgical adhesive (Dermabond), it will look like an invisible coating of superglue over your skin and should fall off on its own. This usually occurs a few days after surgery. Do not soak your incision in a tub or in a pool, as this may introduce infection. Wait until the incision is healed and your doctor tells you it is safe.

If you have exposed sutures or staples, clean your wound once or twice a day with a cotton swab dipped in hydrogen peroxide (can be bought at any grocery store or pharmacy)

followed by a light layer of antibiotic ointment (such as Bacitracin, Bactroban, or Neosporin). If you develop itchiness or redness to your incision, discontinue the antibiotic ointment as many patients can develop a rash from these ointments.

Avoid heavy lifting of more than 10 pounds, straining and strenuous exercise for at least 2 weeks.

Once the incision is healed, you may wash gently with soap and water. Keep your incision out of the sun, which may darken your scar. Apply lotions with Vitamin E, Cocoa Butter, or scar creams such as Mederma Gel, with gentle massaging daily after the incision is healed in order to minimize scarring. Remember that your scar will take almost a year to fully mature.

Keep your head elevated when lying down for a few days after surgery to decrease the swelling.

If you experience any redness, swelling, worsening pain to your incision or fevers greater than 100 F, call the office or go to the nearest emergency room. All emergency situations must be referred to St. David's North Austin Medical Center (12221 N. Mopac Expwy 78758 (512) 901-1000). If you experience shortness of breath, go to the *nearest* emergency room.

DRAIN CARE:

If you have a drain in your incision, keep the drain site clean and dry. Depending on the type of drain you have, you may need to empty it once or twice a day and keep track of the output in a journal. The nurse will show you how to empty the drain and measure its output before you are discharged. Bring your journal with you to your next appointment. In general, the drain output should decrease slowly. Your nurse or doctor may remove the drain in a few days. Call the office if you are unsure when to return for removal of your drain. Removal is simple and does not require anesthesia, the nurse or doctor will remove any suture(s) and take the drain out. You may experience some brief, slight discomfort when the drain is removed.

FOLLOW UP:

You may have an early incision check by the surgeon or nurse 1-2 days after surgery. Pathology and suture removal is performed at the 1-2 week visit. If you have a drain, you should have an appointment with the clinic the next day or in the following days. Call our office if you do not have an appointment already scheduled.