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Postoperative Instructions

EAR SURGERY (OTOPLASTY)

This is an outpatient procedure.

Have someone drive you home after surgery and help you at home for 1-2 days.

Get plenty of rest; follow a balanced diet.

Decreased activity and pain medication may promote constipation, so you may want to add more fresh fruit to your diet, and be sure to increase fluid intake.

Take pain medication as prescribed. Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin unless approved by your surgeon.

Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medications.

If you are taking vitamins with iron, resume these as tolerated.

Do not smoke, as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications.

Activities

Usually, you will be awake and alert a few hours after surgery.

Walk as soon as possible, as this helps reduce swelling and lowers the chance of blood clots.

Do not drive until you are no longer taking any narcotic pain medications.

Children can go back to school after 7 days, if they are careful about playground activity.

Adults can go back to work approximately 5-7 days after surgery, depending upon the occupation.

You may resume social activities in 5-10 days.

Avoid vigorous activity in which the ear might be bent for approximately a month.

You may resume strenuous activity and contact sports in 6 weeks.

No swimming for 4-6 weeks.

Incision Care

Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months.

Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 30 or greater).

Keep steri-strips in place.

Keep incisions clean, dry and inspect daily for signs of infection.

Wear Glasscock dressing for 3-4 days; then wear a clean headband at night for 6 weeks.

You may gently shampoo and rinse your hair after 5 days.

What To Expect

Temporary throbbing, aching, swelling, redness and numbness.

Large pressure dressings and bandages are applied around the ears and head, turban-style.

Some swelling and bruising may last 10-14 days.
Some numbness may exist around the operative areas.
Tenderness could last up to 3-4 months.

Appearance

Usually, there will be a faint scar in the back of the ear that will eventually fade.
Do not expect both ears to match perfectly, as perfect symmetry is unlikely and unnatural in ears.

Follow-Up Care

Sutures will dissolve in 1-2 weeks.

When To Call

- If you have increased swelling or bruising.
- If swelling and redness persist after a few days.
- If you have increased redness along the incision.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.4 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage from the incisions or notice a foul odor.
- If you have bleeding from the incisions that is difficult to control with light pressure.
- If you have loss of feeling or motion.
- If a blood clot forms on the ear.

For Medical Questions, Please Call:

(615) 921-2100 Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM and Fridays 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM. After hours and on weekends, the answering service will contact Dr. Wendel or the plastic surgeon on call.