

# Century Ear, Nose and Throat

## Head and Neck Surgery

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### **POSTOP INSTRUCTIONS FOR NECK OPERATIONS**

**Parotidectomy, thyroidectomy, parathyroidectomy,  
excision of submandibular gland, carotid body tumors,  
brachial cleft cysts, thyroglossal duct cysts, lymph nodes...**

#### **DIET**

Patients who have received general anesthesia may experience some nausea and occasionally vomiting. It is therefore preferable to eat a bland light meal or a liquid diet on the first day after the surgery. Regular diet may be resumed the next day. Also, pain pills cause some nausea if taken on an empty stomach. It is preferable to take those pills with a piece of toast or some food.

#### **ACTIVITY AND WOUND CARE**

Elevate the head as much as possible. Sit in a recliner or use two or three pillows when sleeping. Head elevation reduces bruising and swelling. Occasionally you may notice that the bruises or swelling have migrated to other places (usually lower regions). You may have a dressing or your wound may be exposed.

#### **FOR EXPOSED WOUNDS:**

Keep the exposed wound dry. If accidentally water reaches the wound, dry it immediately with a clean towel. Make sure you have someone with you in the house in case you feel drowsy or faint from taking painkillers.

Only if sutures are present, clean the wound once a day. This is best done with a cotton swab dipped in 3% hydrogen peroxide. If you have not received a prescription for antibiotic ointment, use an over-the-counter triple antibiotic. Apply a scanty amount on the suture line. At times you may not see the sutures because they have been placed inside the wound. On other occasions there may be metallic staples instead of sutures. Occasionally a thin film of clear adhesive is placed over the wound to protect it and allow you to take a shower. If Dermabond (tissue glue) is used, no care is required.

#### **WOUNDS WITH DRESSINGS OR DRAINS:**

Unless specifically instructed, do not remove drains or dressings. Avoid showering and keep the dressing dry. Some dressings may be sutured to the skin. Do not attempt to remove them. Drainage is expected for two to three days after surgery. Just kink the drain tubing before detaching the bulb and emptying it. By kinking the tubing you prevent air and old drainage from being sucked back into the wound.

#### **MEDICATIONS**

An antibiotic may be prescribed for 7 to 10 days following the surgery. You may also receive a prescription for painkillers in the form of codeine or Hydrocodone. These products cause somnolence, drowsiness, and constipation. Occasionally an antiemetic may be necessary for nausea/vomiting.

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### FOLLOW-UP

Please schedule an appointment to be seen in the office in one to two days (708) 460-0007.

For prescription refills, please call during office hours.

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Saturday – 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.