

# Patient Instructions Following Ear Surgery

- 1. Leave bandage or cup on for 24 hours.** It is normal to see some bloody drainage around or on the gauze.
- 2. The morning after surgery, remove the bandage or cup, layer by layer.** Be careful to leave in place any tape or Band-Aid that may be left behind the ear. If present, they may fall off on their own once you start showering.
- 3. Remove the cotton ball that is in your ear canal, and replace it with a new one** coated with Bacitracin or Neosporin ointment when it is soiled with blood (usually 2–3 times daily). Once there is no further drainage from the ear, you don't need to use the cotton ball anymore.
- 4. If there are yellow gauze strips and/or plastic sheeting in the ear canal, be sure to leave those in place** when changing the cotton ball. If they come out, please call the office for instructions.
- 5. Keep the inside of the ear completely dry** until you have your follow-up appointment.
- 6. You may start showering and washing your hair 2 days after your surgery.** You will need to continue to protect the inside of the ear from water. This can be done with a small piece of cotton coated with Vaseline petroleum jelly. Please do not submerge your head underwater. Alternatively, you can use dry powder wash.
- 7. Avoid lifting anything heavier than 10–20 lbs. or performing any activity** that transmits vibrations to the ear (jumping, running, drinking out of a straw, etc.) until you are cleared by your surgeon.
- 8. Some things you may experience after surgery:**
  - Jaw discomfort
  - Ear pressure or occasional jabbing pains in the ear
  - Clicking, popping, pulsation, and other sounds in the ear
  - Your tinnitus may be transiently worse
  - At times, it may feel as if there is liquid in the ear
  - A change in taste
  - Mild headaches
  - If you experienced dizziness when you were discharged from the hospital, it should slowly improve. Minor amounts of dizziness with head motion may be present after the operation. If you have worsening dizziness or pain, please call the office to speak with your surgeon.
  - Hearing will generally be worse immediately after the surgery, even if the surgery was intended to improve hearing. This is due to swelling of the ear tissues and packing in the ear canal. It may take up to 6–8 weeks following your surgery for you to notice an improvement. Maximal improvement of your hearing may require 4–6 months.

**If you experience foul-smelling or yellow-green discharge, please call the office for instructions at 858.755.9343 or 760.827.6405.**

**Adult and Pediatric — ENT Head and Neck Surgery,  
Voice and Swallowing, Hearing and Balance, Allergy**

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