

Home Care After ENT Surgery

This handout will explain the guidelines you need to follow at home after ENT surgery.

Activity

- Use 2-3 pillows to keep your head raised 30 degrees lying down.
- Do not sleep on the side of your surgery.
- No strenuous activity for 1-2 weeks. This means no jogging, exercise classes, swimming or contact sports. Your doctor will give you more guidelines, if needed.
- Avoid bending. Keep your head higher than your heart for 1-2 weeks.
- Do not lift more than 25 pounds.
- You may return to work in 1-2 weeks. It will depend on the type of work you do.
- Do not use a straw if you had nose or ear surgery.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while you take narcotic pain medicine.

Diet

Your diet will depend on what kind of surgery you have had. Your doctor will tell you if you have any restrictions.

Incision Care

Before you leave the hospital, you will be told how to care for any incisions. You may shower and gently wash the incision after 24 hours or after any drains are removed.

Watch for any **signs of infection** including:

- Redness
- Tenderness
- Swelling
- Pus-like drainage
- Warmth at the incision site

- Fever of 101° or higher, taken twice, 4 hours apart

Other Tips

Do not take any aspirin, ibuprofen or other blood thinning products for the week after your surgery, unless ordered by your doctor.

If you have numb areas, do not use a heating pad or ice pack and be careful when using a razor or hair dryer.

No air travel until cleared by your doctor.

When to Call

- Bleeding that soaks through 5-6 gauze dressings in less than 1 hour
- Any signs of infection
- Pain not relieved by pain medicine.
- Increased swelling of the head or neck
- Any changes in facial movement such as facial droop on one side that wasn't present after surgery or is getting worse
- Questions or problems
- Trouble breathing: **Call 911** or go to the nearest Emergency Room

Who to Call

University Hospital ENT Clinic
(608) 263-6190 or 1(800) 323-8942

S. Park St Medical Center- ENT Clinic
(608)-287-2500

After hours and weekends, the clinic number is sent to the paging operator. Ask for the ENT resident on call. Leave your name and number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7701