



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEDICAL CENTER

University Campus

1501 N. Campbell Ave., 5OPC

Tucson, AZ 85724

Office: (520) 694-1000

Fax: (520) 694-6101



Home Care Instructions

Abraham Jacob, M.D.

Department of Surgery/Division of Otolaryngology

Otology, Neurotology, and Cranial Base Surgery

MEDICAL RECORD#

DOB

NAME

VISIT#

HOME CARE HANDOUT CHRONIC EAR SURGERY (TYMPANOPLASTY/MASTOIDECTOMY)

This instruction sheet is designed to help you care for your ear(s) following surgery, and to answer many of the commonly asked questions. Please read the entire sheet carefully. Feel free to call us with questions or concerns you may have. If the nurse cannot address your concerns, a doctor will return your call or you may be asked to come to the office.

Leaving the Hospital

- You will receive a prescription for pain medicine and sometimes an anti-nausea medicine. You will not routinely receive an antibiotic because there are antibiotics in the ear canal.
- The bandage should be removed the day following surgery.

Home Care-The First Few Days

- First 24 hours after surgery:
- Remove all gauze from around the ear, including the telfa (shiny thin gauze) covering the incision
- Remove cotton ball from the outermost part of the ear canal.
- Replace cotton ball several times daily as needed to absorb the drainage.
- It is normal to see blood-tinged or brown drainage from the ear for several days.
- If the drainage becomes yellow, green, or has a foul smelling odor, please call the office.
- The ear canal will be filled with dissolvable packing or antibiotic ointment, which should be left in place.
- With some procedures a half inch gauze roll is placed in the outer ear canal and **should also be left in place.**
- **Do not clean ear canal with cotton swabs.** Clean the outer ear with a soft cloth or cotton swabs to remove dried blood, but if the ear is tender this is not necessary.
- You may wash your hair 72 hours after surgery. **Keep all water out of the ear canal by using a cotton ball.** If there is an incision behind the ear it may be covered with Steri-strips, and these should be left in place. These will remain adherent for about 10 days.
- Do not bend over for 1 week after surgery. If you must bend, bend from the knees, not head-first from the hips. This will prevent pressure build-up in the head.
- Do not blow your nose for 2 weeks after surgery. Sniffing is okay. After 2 weeks you may blow your nose gently, one side at a time. Sneeze or cough with your mouth open during the first week following surgery.
- You may fly 3 days following surgery. Whenever you fly, take an over the counter decongestant 30-60 minutes before take-off. Before the plane begins to descend, spray your nose with Neosynephrine or Afrin nasal spray. Use this procedure whenever you fly in the future. You may use the same treatment when traveling by car in a mountainous region.
- No vigorous physical activity, including sports, until seen for your post-operative visit. With exception of these restrictions, you may return to work or school as overall condition permits. After 3 weeks most patients are able to resume all activities, including sports and physical exercise.
- You may hear a variety of noises in your ear such as cracking or popping. This is part of the normal healing process.
- Dizziness or lightheadedness is normal for up to 1 week after surgery.



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Home Care- After the First Few Days

- Drainage should begin to decrease and pain should also subside. Please continue taking Ibuprofen or Tylenol for relief of mild pain. It is normal for the top 1/2 of the ear to feel numb and this will take several months to return to normal. There may be a change in taste (usually described as metallic) on one side of the tongue and this usually improves within several months.
- You may remove any remaining Steri-strips at home after 10 days.
- All stitches are under the skin and will not need to be removed. After the Steri-strips are removed, the incision should be cleaned gently with peroxide once or twice daily until no crusting is noted. A thin layer of antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Polysporin, Bacitracin, etc.) is helpful for 7 days after removal of Steri-strips.
- **Continue to keep all water out of the ear canal.**

Follow-up Appointments

- **Call the office (520) 694-1000 for a follow up appointment 1 month after surgery.**
- **A 3-4 month post-operative visit is also necessary, at which time an audiogram (hearing test) will be obtained. Please let our schedulers know that a hearing test is required immediately prior to seeing Dr. Jacob that day.**

Call office if:

- Increased pain not relieved by prescription medications.
- Large amounts of bleeding from the ear area.
- Pus/Foul smelling drainage from the ear.
- Redness in the ear area.
- Temperature over 100° on 2 consecutive readings.
- Severe dizziness.

Important Phone Numbers

University of Arizona Medical Center

- (520) 694-1000 Dr. Jacob's office - (follow-up appointments)
- (520) 694-1000 Dept. of Surgery Specialty Otolaryngology leave message for nursing station (post-op questions)
- (520) 694-6000 Hospital Operator (after hours questions) Ask for ENT physician on call.