



HEAD AND NECK SURGERY INSTRUCTION SHEET

DIET- For the first few days after surgery, you may be a little nauseated from the general anesthesia that you received during surgery. During this time, you may want to eat bland foods to avoid upsetting your stomach. After all nausea has gone, you can begin to eat soft food and gradually add regular food as you tolerate them. If you have had an operation on your Parotid gland, you should eat only soft food and avoid excessive chewing for a week after surgery.

ACTIVITY- Strenuous activity should be avoided for 2 weeks after Head and Neck surgery. Strenuous activity that raises your blood pressure may cause bleeding to occur. PE and sports in general should not be engaged in for 2 weeks, or when your doctor releases you.

WOUND CARE- You may have a dressing covering your wound to protect it. The dressing is there to protect your wound from infection and to catch any bleeding that may occur. If the bandage becomes saturated with blood in the first 48 hours, you can remove the dressing and replace the gauze with clean gauze. Sometimes your doctor will place a drain in the wound. This drain is usually sewn to the skin. Your doctor will ask you to return to the office to have the drain removed, usually one or two days after your surgery. You can remove the dressing on the second day after your surgery. At this time, you should have someone clean the incision with hydrogen peroxide and cover it with an antibiotic ointment such as Bacitracin or Neosporin. This cleaning should continue for 7 days after surgery

WHAT TO EXPECT- COMMON PROBLEMS

PAIN- Your doctor should have prescribed pain medication for you. Most of the pain medicines used after surgery contain narcotics. While narcotics are very effective in controlling pain, they also have some side effects that limit their effectiveness. Nausea is a common side effect of narcotics. Some medicines, Mepergan for example, contain Phenergan which is used to control nausea. If you experience excessive nausea, you may want to try using Tylenol only for pain. Do not take aspirin-containing medicine, or Motrin, Advil or similar pain medicines as they may increase bleeding. If you cannot control your pain, **CALL YOUR DOCTOR DURING OFFICE HOURS!**

NAUSEA AND VOMITING- For the first twenty-four hours after your procedure, you will be recovering from general anesthesia. The most common problem that is encountered is nausea and vomiting. This is caused by a number of factors; the anesthetics used and narcotics in the pain medicine that is prescribed. Avoiding narcotic pain medicines, especially in young children, during this time will reduce the nausea and vomiting. If your physician has prescribed Phenergan for you, you should use this if you have problems. If you have had problems with nausea after a general anesthetic in the past, you may wish to use the Phenergan during this time to prevent nausea. If you cannot control the nausea or vomiting, you should **CALL YOUR DOCTOR!**

FEVER- Another problem that can occur in the immediate post-operative period is fever. Many patients experience a low grade fever after general anesthesia. Fever that is higher than 102 degrees may be a sign of a serious problem such as pneumonia. If you are running a temperature above 102 degrees, you should **CALL YOUR DOCTOR!**

WOUND PROBLEMS- Chances are very low that you will have a problem with your wound. The most common problems are bleeding and infection. Bleeding excessively usually occurs during the first 48 hours after surgery. If the bleeding soaks through the gauze in less than an hour, **CALL YOUR DOCTOR!** Wound infections usually happen more than 48 hours after surgery. This is usually after the dressing is removed. Swelling, redness, and tenderness around the wound may indicate an infection. If pus drains out of the wound, a wound infection is certainly present. If you develop any of these symptoms, **CALL YOUR DOCTOR DURING OFFICE HOURS!** If you develop fever in addition to the signs of infection, **CALL YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY!**

You will return to our office between two and three weeks after the surgery. If all has gone according to plan, you will be released to normal activity. If you have any problems or questions at any time, please call us at: