

Homecare after Middle Ear or Mastoid Surgery

The suggestions below should help with a rapid recovery after your middle-ear and mastoid surgery.

Taking Care of the Ear:

Prevent water from entering the ear for at least 1 month when washing your/your child's hair by placing cotton saturated with Vaseline in the outer ear opening. Cotton in the outer ear opening may be changed as needed during the first few days to absorb drainage, but do not attempt to clean or remove any packing from inside the ear canal. Absorbable stitches, if present, do not require removal, and usually dissolve within 5 to 7 days. If the stitches are not covered with tape, apply an antibiotic ointment 2-3 times a day for 2 weeks.

Ear drops should be used as directed, but in general, place 4 drops in the operated ear twice daily for 2 weeks. Replace the cotton ball after each application.

If an “ear-cup” dressing was used, it can be removed the morning after surgery. If it is not uncomfortable, it should be worn at night for a week to keep from lying on the ear. Swimming is not allowed until your surgeon says it is okay.

Dealing with Pain:

Mild intermittent pain may occur during the first 2 weeks, particularly above or in the ear, when chewing. If the skin around the surgical area is sensitive, it may be covered with several fluffed-up gauze pads for cushioning. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be used as directed, but aspirin (including BC powder) and ibuprofen products (Motrin, Advil) are avoided because they can increase the chance of bleeding. A stronger pain medication may be prescribed if mastoid surgery was performed.

Some Things Not to Worry About:

A hoarse or abnormal voice may occur for several days from the anesthesia tube. Numbness of the skin around the surgical incision is common, and should gradually subside within several days or weeks. Popping or clicking sounds may be heard, along with a feeling of fullness or liquid in the ear; these will resolve gradually as the healing process continues. A mild degree of dizziness may be present on head motion, and is not of concern unless it increases. Hearing may be temporarily worse after surgery because of swelling of the ear tissues and packing in the ear canal; improvement occurs over several months. Taste disturbance and mouth dryness may occur for a few weeks.

When to Call the Doctor:

- discharge from the ear lasts longer than 7 days, or shows signs of infection (yellow color, foul odor, or high fever)
- packing or material from inside the ear canal falls out (don't panic, it happens frequently)
- the skin around the sutures becomes swollen, red, or very tender (please note that some redness of the incision itself is normal)
- the stitches break or the incision begins to open up
- you/your child seems to be getting worse-not better-as the days go by.

Your doctor will arrange a postoperative visit to check the healing process and to remove sutures (if necessary).

For Questions:

Call the office at **662-327-4432**.