



EAR Institute of Chicago
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Specialists in Hearing/Cochlear Implants, Facial Nerve/Ear and Lateral Skull Base Surgery

OTOLOGY/NEUROTOLOGY

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MAIN OFFICE/
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**POST-OPERATIVE
INSTRUCTIONS FOR
EAR SURGERY**

1. Please call the doctor's office (630-789-3110) and make an appointment to see him four (4) to five (5) weeks from the date you are discharged from the hospital, unless instructed to do otherwise.
2. Water should be kept out of the ear until it is healed. The hair may be shampooed the day after surgery, if no dressing was wrapped around the head. If a dressing was applied around the head, hair may be shampooed after the dressing is removed. When washing hair after ear surgery, water should not be allowed to enter the ear canal. Water is avoided by putting a plug of cotton covered with a thin layer of Vaseline in the opening of the ear canal.
3. **DO NOT BLOW YOUR NOSE FOR TWO (2) WEEKS** following surgery. Any accumulated secretions in the nose should be expectorated (spit out) through the mouth to avoid infecting the ear. If you sneeze, do so with your mouth open during the sneezing episode.
4. Avoid heavy lifting (>30 lbs), straining or significant exertion for **TWO (2) WEEKS** following surgery.
5. If an ear dressing was wrapped around the head, the dressing should be removed two (2) days after surgery. (If no ear dressing was applied, please skip item #6.)
6. To remove the ear dressing, use a pair of scissors to cut the bandage over the forehead. Remove the dressing and the cotton ball in the opening of the ear canal. Remove all elements of the bandage except the paper tape (steri-strips) on the skin behind the ear. The steri-strips cover the incision behind the ear. You may get the steri-strips wet when bathing. Please pat the steri-strips dry with a dry towel after bathing. The steri-strips will often come off by themselves in one (1) to two (2) weeks after surgery. You do

not need to do anything to the incision if the steri-strips fall off after surgery. Sometimes the steri-strips do not come off by themselves. If the steri-strips are still present at the time of your postoperative visit, the doctor will remove the strips.

7. Bloody drainage from the ear canal is common after ear surgery. If bloody drainage is present, a dry cotton ball may be placed in the opening of the ear canal to catch the drainage. Sometimes the cotton ball must be changed several times a day.
8. If you had surgery to improve your hearing, your hearing will often be muffled in the first few weeks after surgery. The muffled sound is due to packing in your ear canal and swelling in the middle ear. The packing will dissolve in approximately 4-6 weeks after surgery.
9. (If labyrinthectomy surgery, skip to #10) Please contact your doctor IMMEDIATELY if you feel that you cannot hear any sound whatsoever in your operated ear, including the sound of your own voice. If you can hear your own voice in the operated ear, then inner ear hearing is most likely still present.
10. If you were given a prescription for eardrops, the eardrops should be used as directed starting the week prior to your postoperative visit. The drops help to dissolve any residual packing in your ear canal.
11. Should you develop a cold or become ill following surgery, please notify your primary care doctor.
12. In the case of emergency, after hours or on weekends, your doctor can be reached by calling our office (630-789-3110).

Common Symptoms after Ear Surgery

1. Some bloody ear drainage is expected in the first seven (7) days after ear surgery. If the drainage becomes yellow and/or has a foul odor, please contact your doctor.
2. A feeling of dizziness or lightheadedness, especially with head motion, is common after ear surgery. If this feeling persists for longer than seven (7) days after ear surgery, please contact your doctor.
3. A bloody nose may develop in the first few days after ear surgery. The bleeding is residual blood that accumulates in the ear and falls down the tube that connects the ear to the back of the throat (the Eustachian tube). The nose bleeding should stop within 2 days after surgery. If the bleeding persists for more than two days after surgery, please contact your doctor.
4. You may notice a full sensation with popping sounds in the ear during the healing period.