



STAPEDECTOMY

Instructions after Surgery

1. After surgery the ear will have only a cotton ball in the ear canal that should be changed as needed with a clean cotton ball for the first week. The incision behind the ear or on the wrist does not need any care. The stitches will dissolve on their own.
2. If your surgery is done under local anesthesia you will go directly to the postoperative area where your family can remain with you for the rest of your stay. If general anesthesia is used you will spend 30 to 45 minutes in the recovery room prior to arrival in the post operative area.
3. You will be on “strict” bed rest for 4 hours after surgery. During this time you may lie on your back or the un-operated ear. After 4 hours you will be asked to sit up and if there is no vertigo, dizziness, or nausea you will be allowed to walk to the restroom. If this is tolerated well you will be allowed to go home. If you live more than a 20 to 30 minute drive from the hospital it is advisable that you plan to spend the first night in a hotel near the hospital since a prolonged car ride may cause motion sickness and nausea. Vertigo and motion sickness usually subside by the next morning.
4. Pain severity after ear surgery varies greatly from patient to patient but is usually at its worse the first few hours after surgery. While still at the hospital it is common for patients to need IM or IV pain medicines. Oral pain meds are usually all that is needed thereafter and will be prescribed for home use. These are usually needed for only a few days.
5. Diet is “as tolerated” after surgery. Clear liquids will be given first and if tolerated a light food diet can be started that same day. The day after surgery the patient’s usual diet can be resumed. Nausea and even vomiting can occur the day of surgery and will be treated with medication as needed. Only rarely does a patient need to be prescribed nausea medicine for home use. In such cases clear liquids only should be given until all nausea has resolved.
6. The hair may be washed 2 days after surgery. The incision on your wrist or behind your ear may get wet but water should not get in the ear canal for 6 weeks after surgery. Place a firm cotton ball in the ear canal and place Vaseline on the outside of the cotton ball. Hold the cotton ball in place with the finger when rinsing the hair or face in the shower. In the case of children

the hair should be washed at the kitchen sink for better control. Do not use earplugs for 6 weeks after surgery.

7. For the first week attempt to sleep either on your back or the un-operated ear.
8. Avoid blowing your nose or sniffing for 6 weeks after surgery. If sneezing occurs do so with the mouth open to avoid the build up of pressure in the ear.
9. It is recommended that you remain home and rest for 1 week after a stapedectomy. Do not drive during this time. Going for an easy walk is acceptable. After your first postoperative visit you may resume non-strenuous activity. Exercising, sports, heavy lifting (that requires any degree of straining), and air travel should be avoided for 6 weeks after surgery. The exception is a stationary bike that can be used 2 weeks after surgery. Driving to higher elevations is not a problem.
10. Some dizziness and ringing in the ear is normal after surgery. Severe vertigo requires strict bed rest during the first week. If you severe vertigo, phone the Dallas Ear Institute offices immediately. You will not be able to hear well due to gel packing placed in the ear canal. Part of this packing will be removed at your postoperative visits. The rest will dissolve naturally. Popping and crackling in the ear is normal and may occur for several weeks after surgery. The hearing will not be checked for at least 6 weeks after surgery. The final hearing result can take up to 3 months to obtain and may even continue to improve during the first year.
11. Dark red, bloody drainage from the ear is normal. If anytime after surgery the drainage becomes “snotty” with a yellow mucous like appearance or develops a foul odor report this to the Dallas Ear Institute office. In either case all visible drainage may be cleaned off of the visible part of the ear canal with peroxide on Q tips without disrupting the surgical repair.

7777 Forest Lane, Suite A-103
Dallas, Texas 75230
(972) 566-7600
Fax: (972) 566-6560
www.dallasear.com