



TYMPANOPLASTY/MASTOIDECTOMY

Instructions after Surgery

1. Dressing Care:

A. Complete Behind the Ear Incision: The ear will have a plastic cup dressing with Velcro straps containing gauze placed over the ear to absorb drainage. This dressing can be adjusted as needed for comfort. It may be removed and dispensed the morning after surgery, unless instructed otherwise. A cotton ball will be in the ear canal and this should be changed with a clean cotton ball as needed for the first week.

B. Partial or No Behind the Ear Incision: 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.

2. Pain severity after ear surgery varies greatly from patient to patient but is usually at its worst 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.

3. 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.

4. The hair may be washed 2 days after surgery. The incision 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.

5. For the first week attempt to sleep either on your back or on the un-operated ear.

6. Avoid blowing your nose or sniffing for 6 weeks after surgery. If sneezing occurs do so with the mouth open to avoid buildup of pressure.

7. You may resume non-strenuous activity as soon as you feel like. Exercising, sports, heavy lifting, and air travel should be avoided for 4 weeks after surgery. A stationary bike can be used 2 weeks after surgery.
8. Some dizziness and ringing in the ear is normal after surgery. 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 3 months to be known and may even continue to improve during the first year.
9. 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 our office. In either case all visible drainage may be cleaned off of the visible part of the ear canal with peroxide on Qtips without disrupting the surgical repair.
10. If you had an “open mastoid” surgery or if a skin graft has been placed in the ear canal, there will be cotton gauze packing placed down in the ear canal that is coated with antibiotic ointment. It is important that this remain in place for the entire first week. A cotton ball is placed over the packing to absorb drainage and will need to be changed several times during the first week. To do so, carefully remove the soiled cotton ball. It is important when changing a cotton ball in the ear canal to be sure the underlying packing is not sticking to the cotton ball and being inadvertently removed. If so, separate the packing from the cotton ball and gently tuck it back into the ear canal. You will not harm the surgery by doing so. Before placing the new clean cotton ball, squirt a “glob” of over the counter antibiotic ointment into the ear canal. Neosporin, Polysporin, and triple antibiotic ointment are all acceptable. This will help keep the internal packing from drying out until it is removed one week after surgery.
11. If a complete behind the ear incision is used, it is normal for the ear to stand out from the head due to swelling. It will return to its normal position within a few weeks after surgery.
12. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the Dallas Ear Institute at (972) 566-7600.

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