



Head and Neck Surgery Post-Op Instructions

Dr. Justin Elder

Cape ENT

302-703-4025

FLUIDS: It is very important to remember to stay hydrated after any surgery.

DIET: A bland diet is recommended for the first 12 hours after surgery. There are no diet restrictions after 12 hours. You may eat anything you can tolerate.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL/WORK: You will typically need a minimum of five days to recover, but seven to ten days is preferable. Limit straining, lifting and bending over for the first week as this will increase the risk of bleeding. You must not return to work if you are still taking narcotic pain medications. If you are doing well enough to only take Ibuprofen or acetaminophen, you may go return to school/work. When you return, you may still use the narcotics at night, but not during the day.

DRAIN: You may have a drain that comes out of a small incision below the surgery site. The drain will be in for 24 to 48 hours to remove fluid that builds up under the skin. Your nurse will give you instructions and guidance on taking care of the drain at home. You will need to come back to the office one to two days after surgery to have the drain removed.

SHOWER/BATHING: You may shower 48 hours after surgery. Let warm soapy water run over your incision. Do not submerge the incision in water. Do not rub or scrub the incision. Do not rub when drying, just pat the wound gently with a clean towel.

MEDICATIONS: The typical medications given after surgery are:

- Pain medicine – You may use over the counter medications such as Ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Sometimes pain medications are prescribed. You should not drive or go to work/school while still using prescription pain medication.
- Antibiotic: You may be given a prescription for an antibiotic to prevent an infection while you are healing, but this is not always necessary.
- Ointment: You must apply ointment to the incision two to three times per day after your dressing has been removed by your doctor.

FOLLOW-UP: Each patient who undergoes surgery should be seen in our office within five to seven days following the surgery. This appointment should be scheduled at the time you scheduled your surgery. Please call our office to schedule this visit. If you were discharged with a drain, you should be seen within one to two days for removal.