Your Care at Home After Stapedectomy

What is a Stapedectomy?

You are scheduled for a surgery that may improve your hearing. One of the middle ear hearing bones called your stapes may have spongy bone formed around it. This is called otosclerosis. This can cause decreased movement of the bone and progressive hearing loss. A stapedectomy is a surgical procedure that removes all or part of the stapes. A type of prosthesis will replace it.

What to Expect After Surgery

- You may feel some discomfort. For relief, use your pain medicine as directed.
- There may be some blood-stained drainage from your ear for a few days. The drainage may last for a week or more.
- You will have a cotton ball in your ear. This may be held in place by a Band-Aid®. These may be changed as needed.
- You may have some temporary dizziness right after surgery. This is normal and will taper off over a few days. Severe dizziness beyond 48 hours is abnormal. Contact the clinic.
- You may notice some changes in taste when eating. This may last up to 3 months or longer.
- Because your jaw is close to your ear, you may have temporary soreness or stiffness when moving your jaw. If you have soreness in your jaw, you may find it easier to eat soft foods.
- While your hearing may be improved immediately after surgery, you may have trouble hearing because of dressings, packing, or possible swelling. You may not have the best hearing for several weeks.
- You may hear some popping or crackling noises. This is normal.
- You will have your hearing rechecked in the clinic in 4-6 weeks.
- As your hearing returns, sounds may seem abnormally loud for a few weeks.
What to Do After Surgery

- For the next 2 days, keep your head raised at least 30° when you lie down. The easiest way to do this is by using at least 2 pillows to raise your head. **Do not lie on the side of your treated ear.**

- Avoid quick head movements.

- Avoid strenuous activity for 3 weeks or as long as your doctor advises for you. No exercise, sports, or lifting more than 25 pounds.

- Keep water out of your ear until advised by your doctor. No swimming. When showering, use a Vaseline® covered cotton ball to keep water out of your ear.

- Do not blow your nose for 1 week after surgery. After a week, you may blow your nose, but do so very gently to avoid pressure on your ears.

- Sneeze or cough only with your mouth open for 1 week.

- Check with your doctor about air travel. It is often 4-6 weeks before you will be able to travel by air to avoid pressure changes in your ear.

- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking any opioid pain medicine.

When to Call Your Doctor

- Excessive bleeding (bleeding that soaks the cotton ball in 10 minutes or less and lasts for one hour).
- Temperature greater than 100.5°F.
- Sudden dizziness or feeling that the room is spinning around.
- Significant change in hearing.
- Any swelling, increased redness, increased pain, or drainage from the ear canal.

Phone Numbers

ENT Clinic, Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (608) 263-6190. After 5:00 pm, weekends call (608) 262-0486. This will give you the paging operator. Ask for the ENT doctor on-call. Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back. If you live out of the area, please call 1-800-323-8942.