Acoustic Neuroma Surgery

What is acoustic neuroma?

An acoustic neuroma is a benign (not cancer) growth starting on the hearing and balance nerve near the inner ear and brain. It can press against the nerve, causing hearing loss, ringing in the ear (tinnitus), or balance problems. Larger tumors are life threatening due to pressing on the brainstem. Surgery is one way of treating acoustic neuromas.

What to Expect after Surgery

- A large dressing over the incision. It covers your ear and is wrapped around your head. This should be removed in 2-3 days.
- Facial weakness or drooping may occur on the affected side. Most of the time this will go away. It may not go away until after you return home.
- Eye irritation may occur with facial weakness. Artificial tears or lubricants may be prescribed for eye care.
- Numbness or tingling around the incision.
- Headache or pain around the incision.
- Dizziness and imbalance, which should improve over 4 to 6 weeks; although it may last longer.
- Fatigue and emotional lows may be felt for several weeks or months.
- A small incision in the abdomen is possible if a fat graft is done.

What to Do at Home

Pain Relief

- Use the pain medicine prescribed for you. When your pain becomes milder, Tylenol® (acetaminophen) may be used. Follow the directions on the label.
- Ibuprofen or Aleve® may be started 7 days after surgery. Follow package directions.

Activity

- For the next 7 days, keep your head raised 30 degrees by using 2-3 pillows to prop your head up when you lie down. Do not lie on the treated side.
- Do not bend over so your head is lower than the rest of your body for 2 weeks.
- Keep your mouth open while coughing or sneezing for at least 1 week.
• No intense physical exercise or lifting more than 20 pounds for 4 weeks, or the amount of time advised by your doctor.
• No air travel for 4 weeks.
• Avoid doing things that would strain your incision. **Do not**
  o Blow your nose with your mouth closed for 1 week.
  o Strain with bowel movements for 4 weeks.
• Do not drive for 2 weeks or until your doctor tells you that you can. Also, do not drive while taking prescription pain medicine.
• Do not drink alcohol while taking prescription pain medicine.
• Slowly resume your daily routines at home, but no strenuous activity. A short walk with someone else is a good way to get exercise and help improve your balance.
• You may return to work when your doctor says it is okay, about 4-6 weeks. It will depend on the type of work you do.

**Diet**
• Drink plenty of liquids, but avoid those with caffeine, such as coffee, tea and cola.
• Eating soft foods may be easier at first since it may be hard to chew.
• You may need to increase the fiber in your diet since prescription pain pills can cause constipation. Many fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals have high fiber content. Prunes and prune juice often help with constipation.

**Incision Care**
• Check your incision daily for signs of infection. Call the doctor if you have increased redness, tenderness, swelling, pus-like drainage, warmth at the incision site or a temperature of 100°F or higher.
• You may get your incision wet 4 days after surgery. It is okay to use shampoo and conditioner.
• You will be told before leaving the hospital if any other incision care is needed.
• Call your doctor if there is clear fluid draining from your incision or nose.
• Sutures should be removed in 10 to 14 days. They can be removed by your local doctor.
• Eye care will be talked about if you have short-term facial weakness.

**Other Helpful Hints**
Along with increasing fluid and fiber in your diet, constipation may be eased by taking over-the-counter stool softeners, Citrucel®, Metamucil®, Milk of Magnesia®, rectal suppositories or Fleets® enema (follow label directions). **Do not strain with bowel movements.**
Follow-up
You will be scheduled for return visits with your doctor to check your progress.

When to call your Doctor or Clinic Nurse
- Any signs of infection; redness, swelling, increased pain, fever, drainage
- Any clear fluid leaking from your nose, ear or incision, or any salty-tasting fluid that leaks down the back of your throat
- Pain not relieved by pain medicine
- Sudden, severe dizziness or nausea, or a sudden, severe headache
- New increased weakness or drooping of the face
- Excess fatigue or change in mental status
- Changes in vision or increased sensitivity to light

Phone Numbers

ENT Clinic: (608) 263-6190 Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

After 5:00 pm or weekends, and holidays, the clinic number will be answered by 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 shortly.

If you live out of the area, please call 1-800-323-8942.

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