Going Home after Bleeding in or on Your Brain

The amount of bleeding and how severe the bleeding is in or on your brain can vary significantly from person to person. Bleeding in your brain might be referred to as a contusion (bruising for the most part) or a intracerebral or intraparenchymal hemorrhage. Bleeding inside your brain can be from trauma or from weakened blood vessels that rupture. Sometimes high blood pressure causes the weakened blood vessels to bleed, and sometimes they bleed because of an underlying problem. Bleeding from weak blood vessels is called a “hemorrhagic stroke”. Sometimes, the blood travels into the ventricles (where the cerebrospinal fluid is made and stored), this is called an intraventricular hemorrhage.

The bleeding can also be on the outside of the brain, in between one of the linings of the brain, under the bone. This bleeding can cause pressure on the brain requiring it to be drained. It does not always have to be drained. If it does need to be drained, there are different types of surgery, depending on the amount and severity of the blood clot.

Questions about my bleeding

When to call 911

- **Sudden numbness or weakness** of your face, arm or leg. This is often on one side of the body only.
- **Sudden trouble seeing**. This could occur in one or both eyes or involve double vision.
- **Sudden confusion or trouble speaking clearly** or understanding simple statements.
- **Sudden trouble walking**. This can include dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.

- **Sudden severe headache** with no known cause. “The worst headache of your life.”

When to Call Your Doctor

It is a good idea to go over this list with loved ones who are living with you in case they notice any of these changes.

Increased sleepiness

- Changes in behavior or changes in mood
- Continued nausea or vomiting.
- Fever
Showering and Bathing
If you have had surgery, please refer to the Craniotomy Health Facts for You. Initially, you should shower with someone there to help. Please follow the advice of the Occupational Therapist. It may be better to shower sitting down.

Driving and Travel
Do not drive until you have the OK from your doctor. Do not drive if you are taking prescription pain pills. Talk with your doctor about when it would be safe to start driving again. Avoid flying for 2-4 weeks. The pressure caused by flying can damage the areas of your brain that are healing from the bleed, causing more bleeding. If you plan air travel within 6 weeks, you should discuss it with your doctor first.

Work
You and your doctor will discuss when you are ready to return to work. Return to work is variable, and is based on how you are feeling and the type of job you do.

Activities and Hobbies
How much you do depends on your level of comfort and fatigue. Guide your actions by how your body feels. Take breaks when needed. Be aware of the risks that headaches, fatigue, and memory loss can have on certain activities.
In general, limit your activity to walking for the first 6 weeks. This is the best way to gain your strength back, while keeping your head safe. If you have questions about when it is safe to start an exercise routine, ask your doctor.

Household Chores
Until seen by your doctor at your clinic visit, you should avoid heavy lifting and bending at the waist. **Keep in mind you should not lift over 10 pounds.** If you have young children, you may need to gently remind them that it is not safe for you to pick them up for a few weeks.
Also, try to avoid bending at the waist to pick something up. Instead, bend your knees before lifting. This helps to protect your brain at the site of the bleeding by decreasing the pressure inside your head. These tips should also help to reduce headaches, which are common.
Do not use heavy or high speed machinery, such as lawn mowers and snow blowers until cleared by your doctor.

Diet
You can go back to the diet you were on before you were hospitalized, unless your doctor has told you to change your diet.

To help prevent and treat constipation that can be caused by medicines given to treat pain and prevent seizures, make sure to eat foods high in fiber. Fiber is found in many fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. It is a good idea to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and a total of 25-35 grams of fiber per day.

Drinking plenty of fluids, unless your doctor has told you not to, can also help prevent constipation.

Pain
Your headache should improve gradually. Your headache will trend toward improved. As your pain improves, you will need to decrease the amount of narcotic pain medicines you take. This will help with constipation too..

Phone Numbers
Please call the Neurosurgery Clinic at (608) 263-7502. Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, with any question. After hours, the answering service will help you. If you live out of the area, call 1-800-323-8942.