



POST OPERATIVE INSRUCTIONS: CRANIOTOMY

After your surgery there are several points we would like you to keep in mind. Most patients will be able to resume a fairly normal level of activity within a few days. We do ask that you adhere to the activity restrictions described, as well as note some of the other care instructions. We value your health, well-being, and comfort. If you have any questions or issues related to your recent craniotomy (brain surgery), please feel free to call our office at (615) 885-2778.

Activity Restrictions

Getting adequate rest is important after a craniotomy. Following your surgery, we ask that you refrain from lifting, pushing, or straining for at least 2 weeks. Light activity such as walking is encouraged. Strenuous activity may exacerbate headaches and a tendency to fatigue.

Driving

Most craniotomy patients should not expect to drive for the first 2 weeks. Patients who have had a history of seizures or a documented recent seizure will not be allowed to drive for a minimum of 3 months. Patients actively taking narcotic pain medication cannot drive.

Showering & Bathing

You may shower within 48 hours of your procedure unless instructed otherwise. A gentle shampoo (baby shampoo) is recommended for washing your hair. If there is any swelling or puffiness at the incision, you should not vigorously shampoo over the incision line.

Incision Care

Keep the incision clean and dry. After the first 48 hours following surgery, we recommend keeping the incision exposed to air (unless instructed otherwise). We will have sutures/staples removed within 7 – 10 days of surgery.

Medication

Blood Thinners: You may resume your usual medications immediately after surgery, with the exception of any blood thinning agents, anti-inflammatory agents and aspirin based products. Blood thinning agents such as coumadin, plavix, heparin and aggrenox should be held a minimum of 7 days following a craniotomy.

Steroids: We may place you on a corticosteroid (such as dexamethasone) following surgery. Select patients will be continued on steroids an extended period of time based on their diagnosis. Most patients will be weaned to a lower dose than what was given in the hospital. We may also start you on medicine to reduce stomach irritation (such as Pepcid or Protonix).

Seizure Medication: If you have had a documented seizure, then you will be kept on seizure medication for a minimum of 6 months. If you have not had a seizure, you may be kept on medication for 1 week (or longer based on your physician's discretion) post surgery.

Pain medication: We will provide medication for pain control post surgery. Most patients should expect to take medication for 5 – 7 days post surgery to help manage incision related pain. You should take an over the counter stool softener such as Dulcolax or Colace while on narcotic medications to reduce the risk of constipation.



Smoking

You should refrain from smoking. Smoking delays the healing process and increases the risk of an infection.

Office Follow Up

We recommend regular office follow-ups after your craniotomy. Most patients will return for suture removal 7-10 days following surgery and again within 1-3 months for clinical follow-up.

Imaging

Patients may require additional brain scans as a part of their clinical follow-up. Your physician will specify whether a CT scan, MRI or other scan may be necessary during your follow-up visit.

PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE AT (615) 885-2778 IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS:

- Seizure
- Redness, puffiness and/or clear fluid drainage from the incision or separation of the incision
- New neurologic symptoms including arm/leg weakness, vision loss/change, inability to speak or understand language.
- Swollen, painful calf with or without fever

***If you are unable to reach our office and have noticed any of the above conditions, please report to the nearest Emergency Room for prompt medical attention.**