

Greenville ENT Post-op Instructions

What to Expect at Home



Cochlear Implant Surgery

Your Recovery

A cochlear implant is a small electronic device that can help you hear if you have severe or total hearing loss. Your doctor made a cut, called an incision, behind your ear. He placed the implant in the inner ear. The implant does the job of the damaged or absent nerve cells that in a normal ear make it possible to hear (auditory nerves). A small device worn outside the ear turns on the implant. The implant may make a small bump under the skin behind your ear. Your hair may cover the scar, the bump, and the device worn outside your ear.

You may have mild to moderate pain in and around your ear and have a headache for a few days. You may have some popping or clicking in your ear and feel dizzy. This usually goes away within 1 week. The area behind your ear will be swollen for about 3 to 5 weeks. The incision will leave a scar that will fade with time.

Our team will not turn on, or activate the implant until the incision has healed. This is in about 3 to 6 weeks. Most people are able to return to work 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. Discuss what is best for you with your doctor. We

recommend that you work with our speech therapists to learn how to make the most of your implant.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

Activity

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| | Avoid nose blowing for 2 weeks. Avoid sneezing except with an open mouth |
| | Important to protect the area of the implant. A hit in that area could cause the implant to move. |
| | Rest when you feel tired. Getting enough sleep will help you recover. Sleep with your head up by using three or four pillows. You can also try to sleep with your head up in a reclining chair. |
| | Try to walk each day. Walking boosts blood flow and helps prevent pneumonia and constipation. |
| | Avoid strenuous activities, such as bicycle riding, jogging, weight lifting, or aerobic exercise for about 4 to 6 weeks or until your doctor says it is okay. |
| | For 4 to 6 weeks or until your doctor says it is okay, avoid lifting anything that would make you strain. This may include a child, heavy grocery bags and milk containers, a heavy briefcase or backpack, cat litter or dog food bags, or a vacuum cleaner. |
| | You may shower and wash your hair about 1 week after the surgery. Keep water out of your ear by using a cotton ball coated with vaseline or shower cap. Do not put your head underwater until your doctor tells you it is okay. |
| | You may drive when no longer taking pain medicine, and no longer dizzy. |

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| | Avoid sudden head movements and bending over for the first 2 to 3 days after surgery. These actions may cause dizziness. |
| | Do not wear a bike helmet for one month. |

Diet

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| | You can eat your normal diet. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, broiled chicken, toast, and yogurt. |
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Medicine

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| | You should be able to restart any regular medicines. |
| | You will have a prescription for antibiotics. |
| | Children will typically be instructed to alternate Tylenol and Motrin for pain relief. |
| | Adults may be prescribed a narcotic pain medicine (such as Norco). |
| | If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take your medicine after meals. ○ Take your nausea medicine (such as Zofran) as prescribed for nausea or vomiting. |

Incision care

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| | Keep the head wrap bandage in place for 48 hours. |
| | After you remove the bandage, keep the area clean and dry. |
| | No hair washing until after your first post op office visit. |

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care.

For example, call if:

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| | You pass out (lose consciousness). |
| | You have chest pain, shortness of breath, or you cough up blood. |

Call your doctor or seek medical care if:

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| | You have a fever with a stiff neck or a severe headache. |
| | You have signs of infection, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.○ Pus draining from the incision.○ A fever over 101F |