



## Colorado Ear, Nose & Throat Group

### After Neck Surgery Instructions

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#### About Neck Surgery:

Your surgeon may have to do a surgery on you for a bump, mass, or tumor on your neck. After surgery, it is important to follow the instructions below to promote healing.

#### Before your surgery:

- **If you are on blood thinners talk to your prescribing provider for instructions on when to stop before surgery and when to restart them after surgery**  
Avoid any medications or supplements that can thin the blood such as aspirin, ibuprofen, fish oil, and ginkgo biloba the week before surgery.
- **You may not eat or drink anything, including water after midnight on the day of surgery. However, you may take medications with a sip of water the day of surgery.**

#### After your surgery:

Our team wants to ensure you have the best possible experience after surgery. Please read the instructions below to help prepare for your surgery.

- **Unfortunately, head and neck surgery can be painful.** Your incision site could hurt for a full week. You may also have neck muscle tension for 5 days, even with the pain medication. This is normal and part of the expected healing. Some patients may experience ear pain or tongue pain or sore throat from the breathing tube. This is normal. Please take your medications as prescribed. Do not drive while taking opioid pain medications as they will impair your judgement. Finally, do not take Tylenol in addition to Lortab, Percocet, or Vicodin as there is already acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol, in these medications.
- **Diet:** Some patients will have pain with eating. You can eat a regular diet, but start with soft foods and then work your way up as tolerated.
- **Activity:** Take it easy. You should not drive a car, operate any machinery, drink alcoholic beverages, or make any legal or life decisions for 24 hours after receiving anesthesia. Limit any strenuous activity; do not lift more than 10lbs for 3 weeks. You should, however, move your arms and shoulders around gently three times a day after surgery for 3 weeks to keep them from getting stiff.
- **How to take care of your surgical site:** If you have stitches in your incision, please keep the wound dry for 3 days. Please purchase bacitracin (available over the counter) and place the ointment on the incision daily. Some swelling of the wound is expected. You can take a bath from your shoulders down, but the incision should

stay dry. Getting it wet might cause an infection and cause your scar to heal poorly. If you have a drain, you should expect blood tinged drainage from it for up to 5 days.

- **To get the best cosmetic result:** Avoid activity that could irritate the healing of the incision for 2 weeks like lifting weight, or stretching, or itching or picking at it. You should try and keep your incision out of the sun, or place sun tan lotion on it (SPF 50 or more), for 3 months after surgery to keep it from becoming darker than the surrounding tissue and more noticeable.
- **You may experience a fever** (99-102) for a few days after surgery. We recommend you take Tylenol over the counter as needed for this. Additionally, drinking fluids will help.
- Smoking and drinking should be avoided after surgery for at least one week.
- *Call your doctor if:* you have any difficulty with breathing or swallowing, excessive bleeding or swelling from the surgical site, drainage of pus from the wound, redness, or fever over 101 Fahrenheit.

Our Office number is:  
303-238-1366

If you have an emergency call the number above and listen for instructions to reach the on-call physician.