



Tympanoplasty / Mastoidectomy / Major ear surgery Patients Postoperative Instructions

What might you expect following tympanoplasty / mastoidectomy/ major ear surgery?

Pain

You may need a pain medication for the first several days after surgery. Mild, intermittent ear pain is not unusual during the first two to four weeks after surgery and will slowly improve in most cases. Patients who have had a canal wall down mastoidectomy may have more pain that may take longer to improve. Pain above or in front of the ear is common when chewing and is temporary. If you are experiencing this, avoid chewy or hard foods for about 4 weeks after surgery until the discomfort begins to improve.

Swelling

Swelling is expected following surgery. The swelling can occur behind the ear, in front of the ear, around the eye, or around the mouth. Some bruising may also occur. The ear may appear to stick out or appear to be higher or lower than the other ear. This is normal and will gradually improve over the weeks following surgery. However, if a golf ball sized swelling develops, please contact us as soon as possible.

Ear numbness

You may have ear numbness - this is temporary and will improve over several weeks or months. If the ear is numb exercise caution when using a hair dryer on a hot setting to avoid injury to the skin until sensation returns.

Popping or ringing of the ear

You may experience ringing, popping, crackling, or other sounds in the ear. This is caused by nerve stimulation or fluid in the ear from surgery and usually improves with time. You may feel as if the ear feels clogged or filled with fluid. This is entirely expected after surgery.

Ringling (tinnitus), hearing loss, or increased hearing sensitivity

Patients may notice ringing of the ear after surgery – this can be high-pitched, low pitched, constant or intermittent – and is often temporary or decreases with time. You may feel that the hearing is worse and this is due to the dissolvable packing and blood from surgery – this improves with time. Some patients experience loud sound sensitivity in the operated ear and this is usually temporary.

Dizziness

Dizziness may occur following surgery. Avoid sudden movements, heavy lifting or straining; stand up slowly. Dizziness is usually temporary and will improve with time. Gradually increase your activity levels as your dizziness improves.

Drainage or discharge

A bloody or watery discharge is expected during the healing process. Call your doctor's office for a yellow or green discharge with a foul odour. Some patients notice a nosebleed or spit up blood - this is common and results from the blood that accumulates in the middle ear during surgery, and drains into the back of the nose. This is not cause for concern.

Taste disturbance and dry mouth

This is common after cochlear implant surgery and results from irritation of the taste nerve (chorda tympani nerve) during the surgical approach to safely protect the facial nerve, expose the middle ear, remove disease (like cholesteatoma) and reconstruct the ossicles. This is a temporary sensation for the majority of patients. In some patients, this can last a few months or more.

OTHER FINDINGS

If you've had a canal wall down mastoidectomy, you will notice that the opening to the ear cavity is larger and is filled with a gauze and cotton packing – leave this undisturbed, continue the ear drops to keep the packing moist and Dr. Mohorikar will remove it when you see him for your first postop visit. You may have some slight bruising around the eye or corner of the mouth - this occasionally occurs because of the facial nerve monitor electrodes that are sometimes used during ear surgery and is temporary. You may have a sore throat or hoarse voice and this occasionally occurs because of the breathing tube (endotracheal tube) that is used if you have received general anaesthesia. This will usually improve over time.

Call Dr. Mohorikar's rooms for any unusually high fevers, neck stiffness, shortness of breath, leg pain, unusual swelling at the surgical site, or increasing pain.

Postoperative instructions

1. No heavy lifting, strenuous activity, contact sports, or gym class for 4 weeks after surgery.
2. You may bathe or shower, and wash your hair AFTER the ear bandage is removed.
3. Keep the ear dry with an ear plug or a cotton ball and Vaseline – if there is excessive drainage from the ear you may leave a cotton ball with Vaseline in the ear.
4. You will be given an antibiotic to take by mouth following surgery.
5. Contact us as soon as possible for any high fevers, severe headaches, or unusual neck stiffness.

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