Postoperative Instructions

Stapedectomy / Stapedotomy

Oliver F. Adunka, MD, FACS
Professor and Division Director, Otology / Neurotology / Skull Base Surgery
915 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, OH 43212, Office: (614) 366-3687, Fax: (614) 366-4345, Email: oliver.adunka@osumc.edu

Leaving the Hospital
• You will receive a prescription for the following medications once you leave the hospital:
  o Pain medicines
  o Anti-nausea medicine (not always)
  o Antibiotic for 4-10 days.
  o Steroid taper
• The bandage should be removed two days following surgery.

Home Care- The First Few Days
• First 24 hours after surgery:
  o Remove the cotton ball from the outermost part of the ear canal.
  o Replace cotton ball several times daily as needed to absorb the drainage if present.
• It is normal to see blood-tinged or brown drainage from the ear for several days.
• If the drainage becomes yellow, green, or has a foul smelling odor, please call the office.
• In some cases, the ear canal has to be filled with dissolvable packing, which should be left in place.
• Do not clean the ear canal with cotton swabs. Clean the outer ear with a soft cloth or cotton swabs to remove dried blood, but if the ear is tender this is not necessary.
• You may wash your hair 3 days after surgery but keep all water out of the ear canal. Use a cotton ball coated heavily with antibiotic ointment and place it in the outermost part of the ear canal.
• If there is an incision behind the ear it will be covered with Steri-strips and these should be left in place. These will remain adherent for 10-12 days. No care is necessary.
• Do not blow your nose for 4 weeks after surgery. Sniffing is okay.
• You may fly 6 weeks following surgery.
• No vigorous physical activity, including sports, until seen for your post-operative visit. With exception of these restrictions, you may return to work or school as overall condition permits. After 3 weeks you may resume all activities, including sports and physical exercise.
• Hearing may not be improved immediately following surgery. This is due to the packing sometimes placed in the ear canal.

• You may hear a variety of noises in your ear such as cracking or popping. This is part of the normal healing process.
• Dizziness or lightheadedness, sometimes even true vertigo (spinning), are normal symptoms for up to 1 week after surgery.

Home Care- After the First Few Days
• Drainage should begin to decrease and pain should also subside. Please continue taking Ibuprofen or Tylenol for relief of mild pain. It is normal for the top ½ of the ear to feel numb and this will take several months to return to normal.
• There may be change in taste (usually described as metallic) on one side of the tongue and this usually improves within several months.
• If you return for an office visit within 2 weeks, the Steri-strips will be removed in the office. If the appointment is later than this, you may remove the Steri-strips at home.
• All stitches are under the skin and will not need to be removed. After the Steri-strips are removed, the incision should be cleaned gently with peroxide once or twice daily until no cresting is noted. A thin layer of antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Polysporin, Bactracin, etc.) is helpful for 7 days after removal of Steri-strips.
• Continue to keep all water out of the ear canal.

First Follow-up Appointment
• Call the office for a follow-up appointment at the time recommended (typically 2 weeks following surgery) by Dr. Adunka. Sometimes this appointment may be with your referring otolaryngologist, in which case, Dr. Adunka will send a letter detailing your surgery and recommended follow-up care before you see the physician.

Call office if:
• Increased pain not relieved by prescription medications.
• Large amounts of bleeding from the ear area.
• Pus/Foul smelling drainage from the ear.
• Redness in the ear area.
• Temperature over 100° on 2 consecutive readings.
• Severe dizziness.

Important Contact Information

The Ohio State University
• (614) 366-3931 or dania.ahmed@osumc.edu
  Dania Ahmed in Dr. Adunka’s office
  non emergent questions, scheduling
• (614) 366-3687 Hospital Operator
  after hours, ask for ENT resident

Nationwide Children’s Hospital
• (614) 722-2000 Operator
  after hours questions, ask for ENT resident
• (614) 722-6547 ENT Nurse line
• (614) 722-4333 Emergency Department
  after hours emergency, only if no response from resident