

WHAT TO EXPECT

Fatigue

The general anaesthetic, surgery and medications may cause you to feel fatigued.

Pain

Post-operative pain is generally not severe but varies greatly from patient to patient.

Head Dressings and Wounds

A head bandage will be positioned for the first night, to be removed the morning after surgery. The ear canal is not entered during cochlear implant surgery and will be free of any packing. The wounds behind the ear have dissolvable sutures which do not require removal. There will also be some surgical tape overlying the wound which should be left in place to fall off naturally (after about 10 days). These external wounds **MUST** be kept dry until they have completely healed.

Dizziness

You may experience some dizziness and vertigo in the early post-operative period. If spinning vertigo is present, it usually settles quickly within a few days. Imbalance may take a few weeks to fully resolve.

WHAT TO DO

General Care

No strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for 2 weeks. You should mobilise gently after your procedure but do not commence any strenuous exercise for at least 2 weeks. No water onto the external wounds for first week. No swimming. Avoid hair washing during the first week. Avoid nose blowing as much as possible. If sneezing, do so with open mouth to avoid excess pressure in the middle ear which could affect the implant electrode placement.

Fluids and oral intake

It is important to drink plenty of fluids and stay well hydrated in the post-operative period. A normal diet can be consumed as tolerated. Sometimes patients may feel nausea or even vomit in the post operative period due to the impact of the surgery on the balance organ. This is treated with medication as necessary and usually settles quickly within 1-2 days.

Pain relief

In hospital, intravenous pain killers may be required but on discharge home, your pain should be well controlled with oral medications, taken only as necessary. Avoiding sleeping on the implanted side may help with some discomfort in the first week.

Bleeding

In the event of significant bleeding (generally anything over a teaspoon or continuous bleeding) please seek urgent medical assistance, either by contacting the rooms or attending the nearest public hospital with an emergency department. This is a very rare occurrence.

Swelling

It is normal to have some swelling in the region of the implant behind the ear. Some of this is due to the actual implant device and some due to the soft tissues being swollen after surgery. It will settle down in the first few weeks after surgery. If it seems excessive and you are concerned please contact the rooms for review.

Post-Operative Appointment

A Post Operative appointment will be organised with your surgeon within the first 2 weeks after surgery to check progress. Audiology follow up with your implant audiologist for “switch on” will be arranged following this.

“Hearing” following your surgery

Hearing from your new implant will only occur when the external device is fitted at the time of your “switch on”. It is worth remembering that the initial sensation will be different to what an acoustic ear “hears” and takes time to adapt to and learn to appreciate. This is just the beginning of your journey towards improved hearing which our team will enjoy guiding you through.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Attend your nearest Emergency Department for serious complications e.g bleeding or prolonged vomiting or drowsiness.