



SYDNEY CENTRE FOR EAR, NOSE & THROAT

## Post Operative Instructions – Complex Ear (Tympanoplasty, Exostoses Removal, Mastoidectomy & Cholesteatoma)

### WHAT TO EXPECT

#### **Fatigue**

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

#### **Pain**

Generally, even with long operations on the ear, there is only minimal post-operative pain.

#### **Head Dressings and Wounds**

If a cut was necessary behind the ear, then a head bandage will be positioned for the first night, to be removed the morning after surgery. If the surgery was performed endoscopically or through the ear canal then there may be very little in the way of head dressings (usually just a cotton ball in the outer ear). The ear canal will usually be filled with packing material which will be removed at follow up appointments at various stages. **Please do not remove the ear canal packing** and do not let other doctors (eg. Emergency doctors or your GP) remove this without prior discussion. Any incisions around the ear, either behind or in the folds at the front of the ear will have dissolvable sutures and usually some surgical tape which can be left in place and allowed to fall off naturally which usually occurs in 1-2 weeks. These external wounds should be kept dry until they have healed (First 2 weeks). The ear canal with the packing will need to be kept dry for even longer (usually 6 weeks – see below).

### WHAT TO DO

#### **General Care**

No strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for 2 weeks. Begin gentle exercise after this period, if well. No water onto the external wounds for 2 weeks. No water entry into the ear canal for 6 weeks. No swimming during this period. When showering, use cotton balls mixed with Vaseline and throw away after each shower. This is preferable to re-usable ear plugs which can cause infection. Avoid nose blowing as much as possible and sneeze with open mouth to avoid excess pressure in the middle ear which could damage any grafts.

#### **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.

#### **Pain relief**

You will be prescribed appropriate pain medication (analgesia) at the time of your surgery. Instructions will be given in terms of timing of medication but generally regular pain relief for the first 24 to 48 hours is appropriate followed by pain relief only when necessary.

#### **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.

#### **Post Operative Appointment**

Post operative follow up will generally be organised within the first 2 weeks after surgery to check progress. Usually some of the ear canal packing will be removed at that time. Further follow up will be organised accordingly.

**Hearing following your surgery**

Hearing WILL be muffled after your surgery. The presence of the packing within the ear canal will always muffle the hearing, so please do not be alarmed. As the packing comes out, depending on the surgery performed, the hearing may increase but it usually takes a minimum of 6 weeks before any real indication of the post-operative hearing result is known and even then improvements may still occur over the following weeks. Sometimes surgery is staged so that the initial surgery is aimed at removing disease or reconstructing parts of the ear before a second procedure tackles the issue of hearing. Expectations of hearing outcomes will be communicated to you before your surgery and following the procedure, depending on what is found during the case.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

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