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Care after Migraine IV Occipital Surgery

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after occipital migraine surgery (Migraine IV site). This information will help you remember the instructions given to you after surgery. Please have someone available to help care for you after your surgery.

What will I see when I look into a mirror?

The incision will be vertical and in the middle of the back of your head with dissolvable sutures. A drain will be located at the top of the incision and will usually remain in place for 4-5 days. You may have some slight swelling at the surgical site.

How do I care for the surgical site?

Keep the surgical site clean and apply bacitracin (an over-the-counter antibiotic ointment) twice a day. Please remove the old bacitracin with a clean cloth before applying the new.

When can I shower?

You cannot shower until the drain is removed. Until then, you may take a tub bath remembering to avoid getting the surgical and drain site wet.

How do I care for my drain?

Your drain is held in place with stitches into the surrounding skin and should always be well supported to avoid pulling on the drain. The easiest method is to safety pin the drain bulb to your clothing. Monitor your drain amounts and record daily on your drainage log that has been provided to you.

How much pain will I have?

Numbness to the surgical site is to be expected. Occasionally a migraine can occur as you heal from your surgery. You can take your migraine medication as long as it does not contain a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen. You will be prescribed a narcotic pain medication if you are not already on one. Please take as needed for severe surgical pain. Remember to eat when taking narcotic pain medication to avoid nausea. The non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications can be resumed 3 days after your surgery. As you start to heal, you may experience tingling and prickling in the back of the head, similar to the feeling of a foot that fell asleep. To help minimize swelling and discomfort, please sleep at a 45-degree angle for the first week, longer if you prefer.

What can I do after surgery?

On the day of surgery, and for 5 days after, please avoid exertion, straining, bending, or lifting anything over 5 pounds. We encourage walking short distances as early as the day of surgery if you feel up to it and are steady on your feet. Depending on the type of work you do, you should be able to return to work within a week.

When can I drive?

You generally should be able to drive about 5 days after surgery if you feel up to it and you are not taking a narcotic pain medication.

Can I drink alcohol?

Do not drink alcohol for 5 days after your surgery or while taking narcotic pain medications.

When will I be seen after surgery?

You will follow up with the office _____ after your surgery. Plan on periodic follow-ups based on your healing in the first 3 months. Additional appointments may be necessary.

How will I know if the surgery worked?

The goal of migraine surgery is to eliminate or reduce the number and intensity of your migraines. Initially, the surgical site will be numb. As the area heals, it is not unusual to have a wide variety of sensation such as sensitivity, tingling, prickling, or zips of electricity. The outcome of migraine surgery is not determined until 3 months after your surgery.

How will I know if I am having a problem?

Urgent problems after migraine surgery do not occur frequently. Please contact the office if you experience:

- Severe pain that does not respond to medication
- Increasing pain, swelling, or redness at the surgical site
- Fever
- Leg swelling (in one or both legs) with, or without pain
- Medication reaction – skin rash, itching, vomiting, diarrhea
- Shortness of breath, chest pain – Call 911 and let our office know

If you have any of the above problems, or other questions or concerns, please contact my office at **440-461-7999**