

### **Post-operative Instruction After Craniotomy**

- **Diet:**
  - You may resume your normal diet.
  - You should drink plenty of fluids
  
- **Please notify our office if you experience the following symptoms:**
  - A temperature of 101 degrees or higher
  - Chills with shivering
  - Worsening headaches unrelieved by pain medications
  - Neck stiffness
  - Confusion or change in behavior
  - Increased redness, swelling or drainage from the incision
  - Persistent vomiting with inability to keep fluids down
  - Inability to urinate or have a bowel movement
  - Increased drowsiness
  - Seizure
  
- **❖ NOTE: If you are unable to reach our office and have noticed any of the above conditions, please report to the nearest Emergency Room for prompt medical attention.**
  
- **Managing pain or headaches**
  - Take medication as prescribed.
  - Make certain that you take medications with food
  - Do not take Advil (Ibuprofen), Aspirin, or Naproxen unless instructed otherwise
  - Please note that many prescription medications such as Norco and Percocet contain acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not take additional Tylenol while you are taking these medication because taking excess amounts can result in liver damage.
  
- **Incisional care:**
  - You may have one or more incisions on your head with staples or sutures (stiches). These will be removed at your post-operative follow-up visit 7-10 days after surgery.

- You may wash your hair after your stitches and staples are removed.
  - Avoid touching your incision as much as possible
  - Do not put any medications or other skin products on your incision
  - Do not submerge your incision in water (swimming, baths, ect) for 6 weeks.
  - Avoid having your hair colored or permed for 6 weeks
- **Lifting:**
  - Try not to lift, push, pull more than 10 pounds for four weeks after surgery
- **Activity:**
  - It is important to get out of bed and move as soon as possible after surgery to avoid developing problems such as blood clots or pneumonia.
  - Walk with assistance if you feel unsteady or use recommended walking aid (walker or cane)
  - Get plenty of rest
  - Avoid rigorous activity for 4 weeks after surgery
  - You may walk for exercise
  - Headache and fatigue after activity may be a sign that you are doing too much
  - Do not do any activity that increase your risk for head trauma for 8 weeks after surgery (such as skiing, snowboarding, mountain biking, or contact sports)
- **Work:**
  - Plan to be away from work for 4 to 6 weeks after surgery for recovery
- **Driving**
  - You may drive 1 week after surgery if you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications, you have never had a seizure and you do not have any neurological impairments such as visual problems that may affect your ability to drive.
- **You may experience:**
  - Nausea: Post-operative nausea may be related to your pain medications. If possible, take the medications with food. Eat small frequent meals and avoid spicy or fried foods
  - Fatigue: It may take 6 weeks or more for your energy level to return to normal. You will probably feel very fatigued for the first several weeks then notice a gradual increase in energy thereafter

- **Constipation:** This is a common problem after surgery due to anesthesia, inactivity, and prescription pain medications
  - Increase water intake, fruits, vegetables and fiber in your diet
  - Take over the counter ducosate sodium 100mg one capsule twice daily to keep your stools soft. You may decrease the amount taken if your stools become too soft
  - You may also take Miralax 70gm in 8oz of water or juice if your constipation is unrelieved
  - If this does not work your can use an enema or rectal suppository to assist you. This is preferred over heavy straining
  - Please contact our office if an enema or rectal suppository is not successful, please notify us
- **Side effects of steroid medications:**
  - You may be discharged from the hospital on a steroid medication (dexamethasone) to decrease brain swelling. Some of the possible side effects of steroids include: dizziness, insomnia, appetite changes, heartburn, constipation, fluid retention and emotional liability.
  - Steroid help to reduce aches and pains that you feel on a day to day basis so when you are tapering off of the steroids you might feels these symptoms return.
  - You may also feel tired and emotionally down for a few days as you taper off the medication.
- **Questions regarding your diagnosis and treatment plan:**
  - Final pathology results can take 1-2 weeks for us to receive which will be required to make a final diagnosis so we can develop a final treatment plan for you.
  - Your diagnosis and final treatment plan will be discussed with you at your post-operative visit at our outpatient clinic.