



NEUROSURGICAL ASSOCIATES, LTD.

CRANIAL (BRAIN) SURGERY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General Information:

Our telephone hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you are experiencing difficulties or have questions, please call during business hours.

Cranial incisions may vary in appearance and may be slightly red, and swollen. Call our office if you have increased redness, swelling, any drainage, your incision becomes more painful or if you should develop a fever greater than 101.0 that lasts longer than two hours.

Fatigue is very common after surgery and may persist for one to two months.

If you have not scheduled your post-operative appointment yet, please call our office to schedule it at 612-871-7278.

Pain and pain medications:

Neurosurgical Associates strives to make your recovery as comfortable as possible. Following surgery, you may be sent home with pain medication or other medications such as a steroid or seizure medication. It is important to take your prescriptions as prescribed. If you feel that your pain is not well controlled, call our office during business hours to talk to our providers. Do not take medication more often than prescribed. **Do not** suddenly stop taking medication used for seizures unless directed by your provider. Avoid alcoholic beverages while taking pain medications or seizure medications.

Some narcotics maybe phoned to your pharmacy and some cannot. Those narcotic prescriptions that cannot be phoned will either be given to you in clinic, mailed to your pharmacy or you may pick up the written prescription at our office. We will not mail any prescriptions to your home. Please plan appropriately if you choose to have your prescription mailed to your pharmacy. We require at least two business days' notice to refill any prescription. If someone else besides you picks up your prescriptions, we must be informed who will be coming in advance. In addition, that person must present photo I.D. before picking up your written prescription. **We do not refill or prescribe any medications after hours or on the weekends.**

Nausea is a common side affect of pain medications. We recommend that you take your pain medication with food.

You can use ice to areas of pain as needed, 20 minutes at a time. Changing positions after a period of time may also help.

Bowel care:

Constipation is common following a surgery due to decreased fluid intake, pain medications and inactivity. Drink plenty of fluid and eat high fiber foods during your recovery. Excessive milk products such as cheese, yogurt and milk may contribute to constipation. Getting up and moving after surgery will help keep your bowels moving. If it has been several days since you had a bowel movement after surgery, we recommend prune juice, over-the-counter stool softeners or suppositories until your bowels become more regular.

Driving:

No driving until you have been cleared by our providers.

Activity

Resume activities gradually. Do not over exert yourself.

Making plans for when you leave the hospital is an important part of your recovery. Some patients may need help from their family and friends after they are discharged home. Planning this before your surgery is important.

You are encouraged to walk. Start with short walks 5-10 minutes at a time 4-5 times per day and increase as tolerated. Some days you will have more energy than others. This is normal. You may climb stairs as tolerated; we recommend you use the railing.

Do not lift or carry anything heavier than 10 pounds, which is approximately equal to one gallon of milk. No straining or strenuous activity. No bending your head lower than your heart.

Shower/Bathing:

If your incision is closed with glue, you may get your incision wet but do not rub on the incision or soak in a tub or whirlpool until seen in clinic.

If your incision is closed with staples or sutures, keep the incision(s) dry until the staples or sutures are removed. If you shower, you may cover the incision with plastic wrap such as Press and Seal or Saran Wrap and tape. Once you are done showering, remove the plastic, pat dry and leave the incision open to air. Do not rub on the incision or soak in a tub or whirlpool until seen in clinic.

Do not take baths, swim in lakes or use hot tubs or pools until evaluated and cleared in clinic.

Do not use lotions, gels or ointments on the incision until it is fully healed.

Nutrition:

Your diet restrictions will not change with your surgery. Eat plenty of high fiber foods and drink plenty of fluids.

Smoking:

For proper healing, it is highly recommended and often required that you stop using all tobacco products. This includes smoking, chewing, nicotine gum and nicotine patches.

Call our office during business hours if the following occurs:

- Any drainage from your incision
- Increased pain, redness or swelling of your incision
- Temperature greater than 101.0
- New leg pain or swelling
- New unrelieved headaches
- New changes from your baseline – vision, movement, sedation or increased confusion. Your family may notice these changes before you
- Seizure activity

If you experience any of the following, please proceed to Abbott Northwestern Emergency Room or the nearest Emergency Room:

- Chest pain or shortness of breath
- A sudden decline in neurological status warranting evaluation.
- Uncontrollable pain