



Occipital Nerve Decompression Surgery: What to Expect

Before Your Surgery

- One week before your surgery, please stop taking the following medications:
 - NSAIDs such as Ibuprofen, Motrin, Aleve, Naproxen, etc. as these can increase your risk of bleeding during and after surgery
 - Aspirin and any Aspirin containing medications
 - Cold medications that contain Aspirin or NSAIDs
 - Multivitamins and any over the counter supplements
- Please notify your surgeon's office if you currently take any blood thinning medications such as Warfarin, Plavix, Lovenox or Fragmin
- Please call your surgeon's office if you have any questions regarding medications that you should/should not take before surgery
- Please do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your surgery. You may take any necessary medications the morning of surgery with a small sip of water

Hospital Stay

- This is a day surgery and most likely, you will be going home the same day
- Before you are discharged from the hospital, your pain will be adequately controlled with oral pain medication

Activity Following Surgery

- No heavy lifting (greater than 10 pounds) and you should not do any vigorous exercise or cleaning for 4-6 weeks (walking is okay and **expected**). Ask friends and family to help with meals, laundry, shopping and childcare
- You may not drive for several weeks until you have been cleared to do so by your surgeon and are off narcotic pain medication
- Rest and take naps as needed throughout the day. You may feel tired the first few weeks after surgery
- You may use additional pillows under your arms for support when lying down
- In order to prevent blood clots it is important to walk around as much as possible following this surgery

Pain

- You were likely prescribed pain medications. Take them as needed for pain. As your pain decreases you will be able to decrease the use of the narcotic pain medication and control pain with Tylenol only. Do not exceed 4 grams of Tylenol daily
- Please avoid taking NSAIDs such as Ibuprofen, Motrin, Aleve, etc. as these can increase your risk of bleeding after surgery
- If you were prescribed a narcotic pain medication, it can cause constipation. In order to avoid constipation, increase your fluid intake you may also need to take a stool softener such as Colace or any of the other over the counter stool softeners
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking pain medication as it can make you drowsy and impair your judgment

Diet/Appetite

- You may resume your pre-hospital diet
- Drink plenty of fluids, at least eight glasses of eight ounces each day to help prevent constipation associated with pain medication

Wound Care and Drain Care

- You will be discharged with a drain in place. You will leave the hospital with tubes to drain the drain and should change the tube 3 times/day and as needed. The nurses will teach you how to empty and record your drain output. Please make sure you leave with at least eight tubes
- Please keep your incision clean and dry
- Your incision will be closed with dissolvable sutures and surgical glue
- It is normal to have some bruising and swelling for a few days after surgery
- You may shower, but do not soak or take a bath for at least four weeks after surgery, unless told otherwise by your surgeon
- Please attach the drains to a necklace made from string or tape it to your chest so that it does not pull on your skin

Medications

- Resume your pre-hospital medications. Follow up with your primary care physician regarding new prescriptions or refills of your home medications

Follow-Up Appointment

- You will return for a follow up appointment 1-2 days after surgery
- If you have any questions for your surgeon, please write them down and bring them with you

When to Call Your Surgeon's Office

- If you have a fever greater than 101°F, chills, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, leg pain, increased incisional pain not relieved with pain medication
- If you notice signs of wound infection (redness/tenderness at or purulent discharge from your incision)
- If you have other concerns
- Please call 911 or go to the closest Emergency Department for any life threatening emergencies