



Postoperative Care Instructions for Stapedectomy

- Most patients will have a cotton ball and bandaid over their ear to serve as a dressing. These may be removed the day following your surgery.
- Your ear canal will be packed with a specialized foam material (Gelfoam) that will dissolve on its own over time. Your surgeon may also remove some of this material at the time of your first follow up appointment in clinic. Please do not try to pick at or remove the packing from your ear canal. This could severely disrupt your healing process.
- The ear canal must be kept dry during your recovery to achieve proper healing for 3-4 weeks after surgery or as instructed by your surgeon. This includes exposure to pool or shower water. If an incision was used behind your ear, this can be exposed to showering 72 hours after surgery.
- To keep your ear canal dry in the shower, we recommend covering a standard, clean cotton ball with Vaseline ointment or petroleum jelly and putting this in the bowl portion of your outer ear leading to the ear canal. While showering, avoid any direct water to the ear. The cotton ball can be removed afterward. Remove any excess Vaseline or petroleum product with a dry washcloth.
- Avoid sticking any foreign objects in your ear canal at any point in your recovery. Use of medicated ear drops prescribed by your surgeon are required and should be the only thing to enter the ear. Instructions will be provided on the prescription.
- Avoid nose blowing until cleared by your surgeon. Sneeze through an open mouth if possible. The pressure associated with nose blowing may disrupt your healing process.
- Avoid lifting >30lbs, bending over, twisting, or strenuous activities for at least 2 weeks after surgery or until cleared by your surgeon. Jostling activities such as contact sports, jogging, weight lifting, etc... should be avoided until cleared by your surgeon.
- It is ok to sleep on the side of your surgery but this may be sore and uncomfortable.



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- It is ok to drive following surgery when you feel ready and when you are no longer taking narcotic pain medications.
- Flying after surgery is typically permitted but should be discussed with your surgeon.
- After surgery, you may notice that your ear is muffled, perhaps more than prior to surgery. This is normal and expected. Your surgeon will discuss the anticipated timeline of your hearing recovery. You may also notice dizziness and numbness of your ear. These are normal and should recover quickly over time. Your surgeon will discuss these further in clinic.
- After surgery, some patients may have a special plastic and gauze dressing wrapped around the operated ear and your head (called a Glasscock Dressing). This protects the ear and provides gentle but consistent pressure to prevent bruising. You may remove the plastic dressing, gauze, and all other dressings the morning following surgery unless instructed otherwise.
- This dressing will be used in select patients where an incision was placed behind your ear. This incision will typically be closed with either absorbable sutures (stitches) or a specialized skin glue. Both dissolve on their own and do not need to be removed. You may remove crusts, if they should form, with either a clean, damp cloth or a cotton ball with peroxide. Avoid excessive rubbing, scrubbing, or picking at the incision. It is ok to get this area wet 72 hours (3 days) after your surgery date.

If you experience these symptoms after surgery, you should call your doctors office:

- Excessive bloody drainage from the incision or swelling behind / above your ear.
- Any sign of infection such as increasing pain, yellow drainage, or swelling.
- Severe Dizziness and/or Vertigo.
- Fevers in excess of 102 degrees.
- New weakness or asymmetry of the face.

Never hesitate to call the surgeon's office if you have questions about your postoperative progress.