

Discharge Instructions for Craniotomy



You had a craniotomy. This means your neurosurgeon made an opening in your skull to do brain surgery. Recovery after a craniotomy varies, depending on why you had the procedure. The guidelines provided here are for general care. Ask your healthcare provider to provide more information based on your own condition.

Home care

Do's and don'ts include:

- Increase your activity slowly. Talk with your healthcare provider about which activities you can start with. If you have physical and occupational therapists, they can provide a plan.
- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Don't lift anything until your healthcare provider says it's OK. Your provider may tell you not to lift more than 10 pounds for a period of time.
- Take your medicine exactly as directed.
- Shower as needed. But keep your incision dry. You can wash your hair with mild soap after your stitches or staples have been removed.
- Don't put creams, lotions, or other ointments on your incision unless your provider tells you to. Keeping the incision clean and dry will help it to heal quickly. Most stitches or staples in the scalp are removed in 7 to 10 days.
- Don't drink alcohol or use recreational drugs.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep.
- Don't take aspirin, ibuprofen, or similar medicines unless your healthcare provider says it's OK.

Follow-up

Make a follow-up appointment.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away or get immediate medical attention if you have any of the following:

- Increased swelling on the face or scalp
- Incision that becomes red and hot or drainage from incision
- Fever of 100.4° F (38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Chills
- Confusion, memory loss, trouble speaking, or hallucinations
- Fainting or "blacking out"
- Double or blurred vision, or partial or total loss of vision
- Numbness, tingling, or weakness in your face, arms, hands, legs, or feet

- Stiffness in your neck
- Severe sensitivity to light (photophobia) or severe headache
- Seizure
- Trouble controlling your bowels or bladder
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fluid draining from the incision, nose, or ear
- Changes in behavior
- New symptoms show up

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