

# INSTRUCTIONS TO PATIENTS FOLLOWING EAR SURGERY, Such as Total Drum Replacement, Tympanomastoidectomy, Congenital Atresia, Canaloplasty or Meatoplasty

## I. Precautions to be observed following surgery:

### A. NO WATER IN OPERATED EAR.

1. Do not wash hair until after the packing is removed from your ear in approximately two weeks following surgery. A dry shampoo is permitted.
2. To avoid water in your ear **after the packing is removed**, place cotton in the outer ear and Vaseline on the outer portion of the cotton, thus making a waterproof plug.
3. Your surgeon will notify you when water precautions may be discontinued.

### B. DO NOT BLOW YOUR NOSE.

1. This precaution should be observed for one month following surgery.
2. "Sniffing" is permitted.
3. Sneeze with mouth open.

### C. RESTRICT ACTIVITY.

1. No heavy lifting, bending, or strenuous activity until after the packing is removed.
2. You may engage in light activity.
3. You may drive your car if you experience no dizziness.
4. There are no restrictions for air travel.

## II. Medications

1. After discharge from the hospital, you may take Tylenol or Advil to relieve discomfort.

## III. Dressing and Suture Removal:

1. The head dressing and sutures will be removed approximately one week following surgery.
2. After the sutures are removed, you may cleanse the incision with soap and water - dry well.  
It is usually not necessary to re-apply the head dressing.
3. Change the cotton in the outer ear canal whenever necessary making certain that your hands and cotton are clean. Some drainage is normal.
4. Continue to observe water precautions. Your physician will notify you when this precaution may be discontinued.

## IV. Care of Skin Graft Site (arm):

- A. Some surgical procedures require the removal of skin (usually from the upper arm) to be used in the ear canal. Care of this area is as follows:

1. While in the hospital the outer dressing will be removed leaving a thin layer of dressing covering the area.
2. A dressing should not be re-applied and no ointment should be used on the area.
3. Keep dry. When bathing, the area should be covered with plastic wrap (Saran Wrap).
4. Notify your physician should you notice drainage, redness, and/or pain in the area.
5. The small dressing will fall off in 10 days to 2 weeks.

## V. Packing Removal:

1. The packing will be removed from your ear approximately two weeks following surgery.
2. After the packing is removed, you may continue to have a small amount of bloody drainage from the ear. This is normal because areas in the ear canal have not completely healed.
3. Change the cotton in the outer ear each morning and evening and more often if necessary.  
make certain that your hands and the cotton are clean.
4. Continue to observe water precautions. Your physician will notify you when this precaution may be discontinued.

## VI. Hearing:

1. Hearing will be poor as long as there is packing in your ear.
2. After the packing is removed, it will take some time before the final hearing level is established. The hearing result will vary with the extent of the disease before surgery and the type of surgical procedure performed.

## VI. Following Surgery, Notify your Physician Immediately if you Experience any of the Following:

1. Dizziness.
2. Nausea and/or vomiting.
3. Diminution, fluctuation, or distortion in hearing following packing removal.
4. Ear pain and/or drainage following packing removal.
  - a. Mild "shooting" pains during the first 4 to 6 weeks following surgery are not unusual.
  - b. Constant pain is not normal.

- c. Some drainage is normal after the packing is removed. Profuse drainage is not normal.

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