

HOME INSTRUCTIONS

CRANIOTOMY

Dr. Holladay

- Call 913-955-3300 main number to make a follow up appointment for 2 weeks for suture removal.
- Ask for Kellie, RN-ARNP for questions.
- Medication refill for Hydrocodone or muscle relaxants call your pharmacy.

Craniotomies are performed for many reasons such as a tumor, infection, aneurysm, and cranial defects. MRI scans are performed on the day of surgery to assist with the localizing of the lesion and also helps to decrease the amount of bone that needs to be removed to gain access.

Surgery may take 1-3 hours, depending on the reason for the surgery. You will spend the night in the ICU and, generally, will be able to transfer to the floor the following day. Post-operative imaging may be done the day after surgery. Activity is usually up to you after surgery as long as you tolerate moving around. Eating is dependent on nausea. IV fluids and a foley catheter are in place after surgery and will be removed the next day.

Showering and washing the hair is held for 48 hours. You may shower and wash your hair and head after that and pat dry. Keep the incision clean and dry after that time. You do not need to apply a dressing to the incision. It is common for swelling to occur around the head and face for several weeks after surgery. This may be worse in the

morning and improves after up a few hours. Ice pack should be used 45 minutes every 4 hours to the incision region and even the neck to decrease pain for up to 72 hours. The temporal muscle may be sore due to the surgery and chewing may increase discomfort in surgeries around the temporal muscle. It is important to keep working on opening the mouth wide to prevent the jaw from tightening. Ibuprofen or Aleve products may help with the headache as well.

Bring your comfortable clothes, pajamas, and shoes in order to dress as you feel comfortable. Walking helps to improve balance and digestive functions. Rehabilitation department will work with you after surgery to help make decisions on returning home or going home with home health or maybe inpatient rehabilitation may be of benefit. They will determine if any assistive devices are needed, such as a walker.

It is not uncommon to feel fatigued for several weeks after surgery. Once home, it is important to be consistent with your activity. Get back on your home routine as quickly as possible by getting up and going to bed at your normal times. Work around the home as tolerated start slow with just showering, dressing, eating, and light walk. If this is tolerated without problems, then you may increase activity weekly until feeling well. This can take weeks to accomplish. Pain medication will be weaned off over the following weeks as tolerated.

Steroids (Dexamethasone) may be used to decrease swelling of the brain tissue. This medication will be decreased slowly over the next several weeks, depending on your tolerance. Symptoms will change as the steroids are weaned off, such as increase in headache or fatigue. Please report changes that are not tolerated.

Pepcid (famotidine) purchased over the counter will be used, unless you are on medication for acid reflux prior to hospitalization, to protect the stomach while you are on steroids (dexamethasone) take 2 in the morning and 2 in the evening. Report worsening of reflux problems or increasing difficulty eating due to stomach discomfort.

Seizure medication may be prescribed as seizure risk indicates need. Be consistent in the timing to take medications. Discuss possibility of side effects and drug interactions with such medication as antibiotics and birth control with your physician.

Pathology reports may not be out for 3-10 days and may be sent out for verification to other facilities. If the pathology report is not presented to you prior to discharge, please call the office in the next 3-4 days to get the report and further plans required.

Driving is based on an individual basis. If a seizure was noted, then driving is restricted for 6 months without a seizure. Driving retraining is based on rehabilitation evaluation and can be arranged when needed.