

## **WHAT TO EXPECT FOLLOWING EAR SURGERY**

There are some symptoms that may follow any ear operation:

**Taste Disturbance and Mouth Dryness.** Taste disturbance and mouth dryness are not uncommon for a few weeks following surgery. In some patients this disturbance is prolonged.

**Tinnitus.** Tinnitus (head noise), frequently present before surgery, is almost always present temporarily after surgery. It may persist for one to two months and then decrease in proportion to the hearing improvement. Should the hearing be unimproved or worse, the tinnitus may persist or be worse.

**Numbness of Ear.** Temporary loss of skin sensation in and about the ear is common following surgery. This numbness may involve the entire outer ear and may last for six months or more.

**Jaw Symptoms.** The jaw joint is in intimate contact with the ear canal. Some soreness or stiffness in jaw movement is very common after ear surgery. It usually subsides within one to two months.

**Ear Drainage.** It is common to have bloody drainage from the ear canal for 3-5 days after surgery. A cotton ball can be used and changed as needed. If the drainage turns yellow or becomes foul-smelling, you should call your doctor.

## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Diet:** There are no dietary restrictions following surgery. A regular diet should be tolerated the day after surgery.
2. **Pain:** Pain is usually mild after ear surgery and usually responds to Tylenol and/or Motrin. In select circumstances, stronger pain medications may be prescribed but these are rarely necessary.
3. **Dressing/Packing:** You may have a plastic ear dressing over your ear immediately after surgery. This should apply gentle pressure. If it is too tight you can loosen slightly. The plastic ear dressing can be removed 24 hours after surgery. You may replace the cotton ball on the outside of the ear canal as needed. Bloody discharge is typical for the first few days after surgery. Usually there is additional packing in the ear canal that you may be able to see. This should not be removed and will dissolve on its own.
4. **Activity:** Please avoid vigorous exercise or heavy lifting or straining for 3 weeks after surgery. You should be able to resume your normal activities of daily living immediately.
5. **Ear Drops:** Take all medications as prescribed. **Begin the drops 1 week before your first postoperative appointment and continue until you see your doctor. You should instill 5 drops twice per day.**
6. **Showering and Swimming:** You may shower the day after surgery. Put a cotton ball with Vaseline in the ear so that the ear canal does not get wet. No swimming until cleared by your doctor.
7. **Travel:** You may resume airline travel 3 weeks after surgery once your doctor has seen you.
8. **Call your doctor** for the following:
  - a. Fever > 101.5.
  - b. Increasing pain.
  - c. Dizziness lasting longer than 72 hours after surgery.
  - d. Sudden loss of hearing after surgery after a period of "good" hearing.
9. **Follow up** with Dr. Tolisano 3 weeks after your surgery. To make an appointment, call David Vallejos (ENT Scheduler) at 301 295 4661 the day after your surgery. Please leave your full name and date of birth for any voice messages.