



Patient & Family Guide
2019

Brain Tumour Surgery

A Guide for at Home



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Things to know before you go home

Staples or stitches

- You will need to make an appointment with your family doctor to have your staples or stitches removed on:
_____ (date).
- You have stitches that dissolve (go away on their own). It takes about 3-4 weeks for them to dissolve completely.

Activity

You may feel tired for the first several weeks after you go home. This is normal. Exercise and staying busy are important for your healing, so add to your activities slowly over time.

Avoid straining, bending at the waist, high impact exercise (such as running), and heavy lifting (over 10 pounds) for at least 2 weeks. You can go back to sexual activity (sex) when you feel well enough.

Driving

- Can drive
- Cannot drive

Taking care of your incision (cut)

Try not to touch your incision. Leave it open to the air to heal. You or a family member should check your incision every day for redness, swelling, or drainage. Contact your family health care provider if you have concerns.

Hair washing

You may wash your hair 3 or 4 days after surgery. Use a mild shampoo and gently pat the incision dry (do not rub), using a clean towel.

Diet

You may go back to eating regular meals. Following *Canada's Food Guide* will help you make sure you are getting everything you need to stay healthy.

Alcohol

Alcohol may hurt the brain and the way your brain works. It can make the side effects of some medicines worse and raise the chance of having a seizure. Avoid alcohol until you are recovered and have talked with your family health care provider about drinking.

Medicines

You may have started taking a medicine called dexamethasone (Decadron[®]) before or after surgery. This medicine is a steroid which helps to lower swelling in the brain caused by the tumour.

Please read the pamphlet *Use of Steroids (Dexamethasone/Decadron[®]) for Patients with a Brain Tumour*.

Keep a list of all of the medicines you are taking. Give a copy of this list to all of the health care professionals involved in your care.

Things to watch for

Get medical help right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Redness or drainage from your incision. This could be a sign of infection or a leak of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).
- Chills and fever. This could be a sign of infection.
- Changes in your vision or speech, or new weakness in your face, arms, or legs.
- Seizures. These may range from a mild twitching of the face, arm, or leg without loss of consciousness to total body shaking with loss of consciousness.

- Swelling, redness, or tenderness in your calf or thigh. This could be a sign of a blood clot or deep vein thrombosis (DVT). These are quite common in patients who have had brain tumour surgery.
- Shortness of breath. This could be a sign of a blood clot in your lung. This is called a pulmonary embolism (PE).

Please read the pamphlet *Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)* for more information about these conditions.

Recovery

Rest, healthy food, regular exercise, and a positive attitude will help with your healing, but recovery takes time and patience. You may find it helpful to talk with someone or join a support group.

The Halifax Brain Tumour Support Group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (except July and August) from 6:30-8 p.m. at The Lodge That Gives, 5826 South Street.

- › Visit www.braintumour.ca/280/halifax-nova-scotia for info on this Group.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Neurosurgeon or Brain Tumour Nurse at 902-473-5443.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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Prepared by: Division of Neurosurgery

Designed by: NSHA Library Services

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

WL85-1348 © January 2019 Nova Scotia Health Authority

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.