



Patient & Family Guide

2023

After Ear Surgery

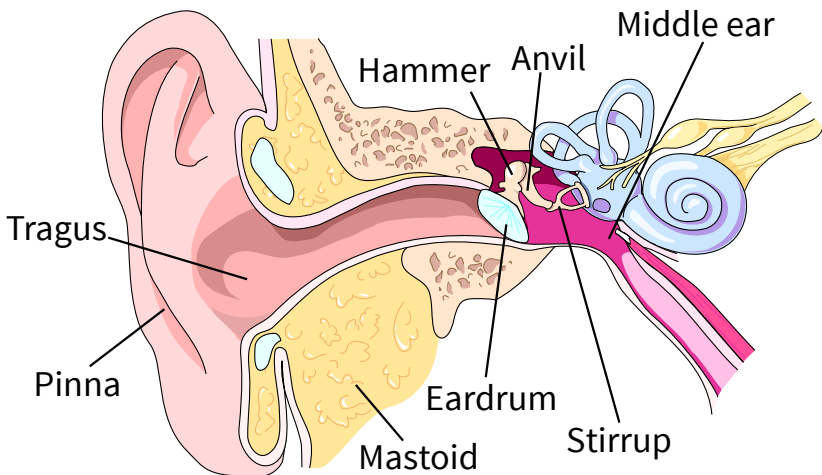
Valley Regional Hospital



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After Ear Surgery

This pamphlet explains what to expect after ear surgery and how to care for yourself at home. If you have questions or need help during your hospital stay, please ask a member of your health care team. We are here to help you.



Types of surgery

- Tympanomastoidectomy:** removes diseased tissue from the mastoid and middle ear
- Tympanoplasty:** fixes a hole in the eardrum to make your hearing better

After surgery

- You will have packing and Polysporin® in your ear and behind your eardrum. This will make your hearing feel worse. The packing will dissolve (go away) in about 3 months.

- You may have stitches behind or in front of your ear.
- You will have a bandage over your ear.
Keep the bandage on for 24 hours (1 day) after your surgery.
- To check that a nerve in your face is working normally, your nurse will ask you to:
 - › Smile
 - › Pucker your lips
 - › Close your eyes
 - › Lift your eyebrows
 - › Wrinkle your forehead
- **Use your call bell and wait for a nurse before you get up for the first time, even if you feel OK. Do not try to get up by yourself.** You may be drowsy or dizzy.
- Your intravenous (IV) will be taken out when you can drink by mouth and do not have nausea (feel sick to your stomach).
- If you have nausea, ask your nurse for medication.
- You may have trouble moving your face on the operated side. This is because the nerve in your face was frozen during surgery. This will go away over time.
- You can expect to have some pain and discomfort after your surgery. Ask your nurse for medication, if needed. Your nurse can give you pain medication every 4 hours.

- **Keep your mouth open when you cough or sneeze.** Try to cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- **Tell your nurse if you feel dizzy, have a spinning feeling, or lose your balance.** This is common. It usually lasts for a few hours or a few days, but it may last for a few weeks or longer. A spinning feeling is more common if you had surgery around your hearing bones or inner ear.
- **You cannot go home alone. A responsible adult must take you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours after your surgery.**

At home

Medication

- Your surgeon will give you a prescription for pain medication or antibiotics before you go home. They may also give you pain medication (like morphine, Tylenol® 3) to take home with you. They may also give you drops to start **after** your first follow-up visit.
- **Do not drink alcohol while taking pain medication.**
- **Do not drive while taking pain pills.**

Instructions:

- You can shower and wash your hair **48 hours (2 days)** after your surgery.

- **Before** you get in the shower, put Vaseline® on a cotton ball and place it in your ear hole. This will keep water from going into your ear.
- **After 48 hours, it is OK if your stitches get wet, but you must keep water out of your ear until your surgeon tells you it is OK.**
- **Wash your stitches with peroxide and then put Polysporin® on your stitches in the morning and at night for 7 days after your surgery.**
- **After 7 days of putting Polysporin® on your stitches, switch to using Vaseline®.**
- If you have a lot of drainage (fluid), keep a cotton ball in your ear. If you do not have any drainage, you **do not** need to use a cotton ball (except in the shower). Replace the cotton ball if it gets wet.

Do not:

- › fly until your surgeon says it is OK.
- › jog, run, or play contact sports for 7 days.
- › strain while having a bowel movement (poop). To help yourself poop easily, eat prunes or bran and drink 6 to 8 large glasses of water each day.
- › smoke until your surgeon says it is OK.

After surgery, it is normal for:

- › your hearing to be worse temporarily (for a short time).

- › your operated ear to stick out from your head more.
- › there to be a small amount of bruising around your eyes or your operated ear.
- › there to be a small amount of swelling on your face on the operated side.
- › your sense of taste to change on your tongue on the operated side. This usually goes away in a few weeks to months.
- › your ear and face to feel numb on the operated side. This is **not** paralysis. Paralysis is not being able to move one side of your face.

Call your surgeon or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you have:

- › More pain or pain that cannot be controlled by pain medication
- › Drainage (fluid) from your ear that is green or has a bad smell
- › A fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
- › Dizziness, a spinning feeling, or losing your balance lasting more than 7 days
- › Paralysis on one side of your face that does not get better a few hours after surgery

Follow-up

- **Do not** take out the packing in your ear. Your surgeon will take it out for you.
- Your surgeon will take out your stitches or staples in 1 to 2 weeks.
- You will have packing in your ear that will dissolve. After your first follow-up visit:
 - › Use Ciprodex® drops 2 times a day for 14 days.
 - › Then use oil 2 times a day until your second follow-up visit.
- You may have a clear, silicone disk protecting your eardrum. The disc is about the size of a dime. Your surgeon will remove it 4 to 8 weeks after your surgery. Sometimes the disk will come off on its own when you flush your ear. You may see a dime-sized piece of plastic come out. **You do not need to put it back in.**
- You may go back to work when your surgeon says it is OK. Most people can go back to work after 7 days.
- You will need a hearing test about 3 to 4 months after your surgery. This is usually done at your 3rd or 4th follow-up visit.

It is important to keep water out of your operated ear until the graft takes and your surgeon tells you that you have healed. This is usually 1 to 4 months after your surgery. Getting water in your ear can cause:

- › Infection
- › Holes to reopen
- › Graft failure (does not take)

Looking for more health information?

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

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>

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Prepared by: Otolaryngology, Valley Regional Hospital

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