

After Your Brain Tumour Surgery

Care at Home

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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

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Learn more:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources>

Recovery

- Recovery will take time and patience. It can help to rest, eat healthy foods, get regular exercise, and have a positive attitude.
- You may also find it helpful to talk about your experience with someone or join a support group.

If you have any questions or concerns, call your neurosurgeon or your brain tumour nurse:
> Phone: 902-473-5443

Follow-up:

Things to watch for

Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Redness or drainage from the incision
 - › This may be a sign of an infection or a leak of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).
- Chills and fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
 - › This could be a sign of an infection.
- 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 common in people 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).
- Trouble seeing or talking, or new weakness in your face, arm(s), or leg(s)
- Seizure
 - › This may range from mild twitching of your face, arm, or leg without loss of consciousness, to total body shaking with loss of consciousness.

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Before you go home

Staples or stitches

- You must make an appointment with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) to have your staples or stitches removed on: _____ (date).
- You have stitches that dissolve (go away on their own). It will take about 3 to 4 weeks for them to dissolve fully.

Activity

- You may feel tired for the first several weeks after you go home. This is normal.
- It is important to exercise and stay busy. This will help with your healing. Do more activities slowly over time.

For at least 2 weeks (14 days):

- › Avoid straining, bending at the waist, high impact exercise (like running), and heavy lifting (over 10 pounds). You can have 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. This will help it heal.
- You or your support person should check your incision every day. Contact your primary health care provider if you have redness, swelling, or drainage.

Washing your hair

- You may wash your hair 2 to 3 days after your surgery. Use a mild shampoo.
- Using a clean towel, gently pat the incision dry
Do not rub.

Eating and drinking

- You may go back to eating your usual meals.
- Follow *Canada's Food Guide* to help you make sure you are getting the nutrition you need to stay healthy:
 - › www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-guide.html



Scan the QR code on your device (open the camera on your device, point the camera at the code, and tap the banner or border that appears)

Alcohol

- Alcohol can:
 - › Hurt your brain and change the way it works.
 - › Make the side effects of some medications worse.
- **Do not drink alcohol until you are recovered.** Talk with your primary health care provider before drinking.

Medications

- You may have started taking a medication called dexamethasone (Decadron®) before or after your surgery. This is a steroid that helps to lower swelling in your brain caused by the tumour.
- For more information, ask your health care team for pamphlet 4096, *Use of Steroids (Dexamethasone/Decadron®) for Patients with a Brain Tumour*, scan the QR code below, or visit:

- › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/NSHCCP4096



Keep a list of all of the medications you are taking. Give a copy of this list to all of your health care providers.