

EAR SURGERY

Discharge Advice

Patient information - Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose & Throat) Dept.

Wound Care

The wound is susceptible to infection, thus getting it wet may slow the healing process. There may be two parts to the wound: one **outside** the ear (on the skin in front of or behind the ear) and one deep **inside** the ear canal.



- It is VERY IMPORTANT to keep the outside wound dry for five days after your operation. When washing your hair at this time, try to get someone to help you to keep the area dry. A plastic cup held over the ear can make hair washing easier.
- Once the sutures have been removed, you may wash gently around the outside wound and pat the area dry.
- It is VERY IMPORTANT to keep the inside wound dry until your surgeon gives you a clearance. This may be for six weeks or more. Keep water from going inside your ear by using cotton wool with vaseline rubbed through it to make a waterproof plug.

There may be packing in your ear. This may either be a product that dissolves, or a ribbon with antibiotic cream. If there is ribbon packing in your ear, it should stay there until removed by the surgeon – usually one to two weeks after surgery.

- A small wad of cotton wool on the outside of the ear can be changed daily, or more often if it becomes moist. Wash your hands before doing so. The cotton wool frequently sticks to the ribbon pack, so change the cotton wool carefully. If necessary cut, with clean sharp scissors, near the 'stuck' end of the ribbon to free it. Get someone to help you or change the cotton wool in front of a mirror.
- There may be some sutures to remove at the follow-up appointment.

Pain Relief

You will be given a prescription for pain relief on discharge. Do take this regularly and do not exceed the recommended dose:

- Paracetamol (tablets or syrup), taken every 4 - 6 hours for 24 - 48 hours as prescribed, is usually all that is required.
- If taking Codeine, drink plenty of fluids and increase fibre to help prevent constipation.
- Do not take Aspirin or Disprin for pain relief as these can cause bleeding. Discuss other blood thinning medications with your doctor.

Precautions

- Do not swim until your surgeon has given you a clearance.
- Avoid blowing your nose, lifting heavy objects or strenuous exercise for at least 10 days.
- High altitudes and flying should be avoided for six weeks. If you have had a stapedectomy, check with your surgeon at your follow-up appointment regarding when you can fly.
- If sneezing is unavoidable, try sneezing with your mouth open.
- It is usual to have time off school or work following surgery. Your surgeon will advise you about this.

Complications

- If you experience any of the following:
 - increasing pain
 - swelling or redness in or around the ear and wound
 - smelly discharge from the ear (the packing has a chemical smell)
 - feeling feverish – hot or cold
 - vertigo or dizziness
- Please seek medical advice from your GP or through the contact details on this pamphlet.

Follow up

Please keep any outpatient appointments

Contact Details

Christchurch Hospital

ORL(ENT)Outpatient Department

Telephone: 364 0985

Hours: Monday–Friday 8.00 am–5.00 pm

Ward 21 (Children’s Ward)

Telephone: 364 0210 Extension: 89210

Adult ORL Ward

Telephone: 364 0640 and ask for ENT ward

Day Surgery Unit

Telephone: 364 4034

Hours: Monday–Friday 7.00 am–7.00 pm

1st floor Christchurch Women’s Hospital

For more information about:

- your health and medication, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz
- hospital and specialist services, go to www.cdhb.health.nz