



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEDICAL CENTER

University Campus

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Home Care Instructions

Abraham Jacob, M.D.

**Department of Surgery/Division of Otolaryngology
Otology, Neurotology, and Cranial Base Surgery**

MEDICAL RECORD#

DOB

NAME

VISIT#

HOME CARE HANDOUT COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

This instruction sheet is designed to help you care for your ear(s) following surgery, and to answer many of the commonly asked questions. *Please read the entire sheet carefully.* Feel free to call us with questions or concerns you may have. If the nurse cannot address your concerns, a doctor will return your call or you may be asked to come to the office.

Leaving the Hospital

- You will receive a prescription for pain medicine and sometimes an anti-nausea medicine. You will not routinely receive a prescription for antibiotics.
- The bandage should be removed the day following surgery.

Home Care-The First Few Days

- The auricle (outer ear) can be wiped gently with a soft cloth or cotton swabs to remove dried blood, but if the ear is tender this is not necessary.
- You may wash your hair 72 hours after surgery.
- The incision behind the ear may be covered with Steri-strips and these should be left in place. These will remain adherent for 10-12 days. In some cases the stitches will be visible (without Steri-strips) and the incision should be cleaned gently with peroxide once or twice daily until no crusting is noted. A thin layer of antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Polysporin, Bacitracin, etc.) is helpful for the first few weeks.
- Do not bend over for 1 week after surgery. If you must bend, bend from the knees, not head-first from the hips. This will prevent pressure build-up in the head.
- Do not blow your nose for 2 weeks after surgery. Sniffing is okay. This is particularly important should you develop a cold. After 2 weeks you may blow your nose gently, one side at a time.
- Sneeze or cough with your mouth open during the first week following surgery.
- You may fly 3 days following surgery. Whenever you fly, take an over-the-counter decongestant 30-60 minutes before take-off. Before the airplane begins to descend, spray your nose with Neosynephrine or Afrin nasal spray. Use this procedure whenever you fly in the future. You may use the same treatment when traveling by car in a mountainous region.
- No vigorous physical activity, including sports, until seen for your post-op visit. With the exception of these restrictions, you may return to work or school as overall condition permits.
- After 3 weeks you may resume all activities, including sports and physical exercise while adhering to the restrictions recommended by the implant manufacturer.
- You may hear a variety of noises in your ear such as cracking or popping. This is part of the normal healing process.
- Dizziness or lightheadedness is normal for up to one week after surgery.
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ear) is also noted by some patients. This may improve with time.



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Home Care-After the First Few Days

- Pain should begin to subside. You may continue taking Tylenol or Ibuprofen as needed.
- It is normal for the top 1/2 of the ear to feel numb and this will take several months to return to normal.
- There may be a change in taste (usually described as metallic) on one side of the tongue and this usually improves within a few months.

Your First Follow-up Appointment

- **Call the office (520) 694-1000 for a follow up appointment 1 month after surgery.**
- **Cochlear implants are typically activated 6 weeks after surgery by our Audiologists. Please make sure that an appointment has been scheduled with them prior to leaving you post-operative visit with Dr. Jacob.**

Call The Office If:

- Increased pain not relieved by prescription medicines.
- Large amounts of bleeding for the ear area.
- Pus/Foul smelling drainage from the ear or incision.
- Redness in the ear area.
- Temperature over 100° on 2 consecutive readings.
- Severe dizziness.

Important Phone Numbers

University of Arizona Medical Center

- (520) 694-1000 Dr. Jacob's office - (follow-up appointments)
- (520) 694-1000 Dept. of Surgery Specialty Otolaryngology leave message for nursing station (post-op questions)
- (520) 694-6000 Hospital Operator (after hours questions) Ask for ENT physician on call.