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Middle Ear Surgery and Stapedotomy – Postoperative Instructions

Caring for Your Ear

1. Start using your antibiotic ear drops the day after surgery. After applying the drops, place a clean cotton ball in your ear and change it as needed.
2. Some packing material may come out on its own. This is normal. Your doctor will remove the rest at your follow-up visit. Use a cotton ball in the outer part of your ear to catch drainage. If the drainage becomes pus-like or smells bad, call your doctor.
3. You can wash your hair 2 days after surgery, but do not get your ears wet until your doctor says it's safe. Use a cotton ball with ointment to plug your ear, with care not to push the cotton ball into the ear canal.
4. Do not pull out any packing from your ear. Let your doctor take care of it.
5. Never put anything in your ear. No cotton swabs, fingers, or tools.
6. Do not "pop" your ears by holding your nose and blowing. If you sneeze, do it with your mouth open. Avoid blowing your nose hard. This helps prevent damage to your ear.

Activities After Surgery

- You can drive the next day if you are not dizzy or feeling off balance.
- Flying is okay after 48 hours, but it's best to wait a month if possible. Please discuss flying with your physician prior to making any arrangements.
- No contact sports or intense physical activity until your doctor says it's okay.

Follow-Up Appointments

- Your first check-up will be 1 to 3 weeks after surgery. After that, follow-ups usually happen every 4 to 8 weeks until your ear is fully healed. Keeping these visits is important!

What You Might Feel After Surgery

- Ear drainage is normal. Use cotton balls to absorb it. If it becomes thick, yellow/green, or smells bad, call your doctor.
- Mild to moderate pain is common for the first few days. Use Tylenol and Motrin as needed. If the pain is strong, use your prescription pain medicine as directed.
- Taste changes or dry mouth can happen and may last a few weeks or longer.
- Ringing in the ears (tinnitus) may get worse after surgery but usually improves as your hearing gets better.
- Numbness of the ear can last six months or more after surgery.

When to Call the Doctor

- If you have severe pain, a fever over 101°F (38.3°C), worsening dizziness, bad-smelling drainage, neck stiffness, or severe headaches, contact your doctor.

Be patient with your healing—it can take weeks or months to notice full improvements. If you have any questions or concerns following this procedure, please call our office at **(904)880-0911**.