Care after Migraine IV (Occipital) Surgery

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after occipital migraine surgery (Migraine IV site). This information will help you remember the instructions given to you after surgery.

Appearance:

- The incision will be in the middle of the back of your head with dissolvable sutures. There will be a protective coating on the incision that remains in place for 1 week.
- You may have some slight swelling at the surgical site.
- Numbness to the surgical site is to be expected.
- Occasionally a migraine can occur as you heal from your surgery.
- As you start to heal, you may experience tingling and prickling in the back of the head, similar to the feeling of a foot that fell asleep.

Activity/Bathing/Sleeping:

- On the day of surgery, and for 5 days after, please avoid exertion, straining, bending, or lifting anything over lbs.
- We encourage walking short distances as early as the day of surgery if you feel up to it and are steady on your feet.
- Depending on the type of work you do, you should be able to return to work within 1 week.
- You generally should be able to drive about 5 days after surgery if you feel up to it and you are not taking a narcotic pain medication.
- Please do not wash your hair for 5 days after surgery. After 5 days, please be gentle when washing around the incision.
- To help minimize swelling and discomfort, please sleep at a 45-degree angle for the first week, longer if you prefer.

Drain/Incision Care:

- No drains are used for this operation.
- After 1 week, clean your incision with a Q-tip and warm water, then apply aquaphor ointment at least twice a day for 1 week.

Diet:

- We recommend a diet consisting of high protein and easily digestible foods (i.e. toast, rice, bananas, eggs, chicken, oatmeal, protein shakes, etc.)
- **Do not drink alcohol for seven days after your surgery or while taking narcotic pain medicines.**
- Limit your salt intake to help decrease swelling.
- Remember to eat when taking narcotic pain medication to avoid nausea.
- Please refer to the “Medications and Foods to Avoid” List provided in your pre-surgical email sent

Medications:

- The most discomfort you will have lasts the first 3-5 days.
- You can take your migraine medication as long as it does not contain a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen.
- We will prescribe an antibiotic, nausea medication and pain medication for you. Follow the directions on the bottle for their use.
- The pain medication may make you feel drowsy, so please have someone assist you at home, and do not attempt to drive while you are taking prescription pain medication.
- A stool softener (Colace) is recommended after surgery.
- Most patients will find that Tylenol will take care of the discomfort.
- **Do not use aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin) or other NSAID medication for 7-10 days after surgery.**

Post-Operative Appointments:

- You will follow up 1 week after your surgery.
- Plan on periodic follow-ups based on your healing in the first 3 months.
- Additional appointments may be necessary.
- The outcome of migraine surgery is not determined until 3 months after your surgery.

Post-Operative Concerns: Urgent problems after migraine surgery do not occur frequently. Please contact the office if you experience:

- Severe pain that does not respond to medication
- Increasing pain, swelling, or redness at the surgical site
- Fever
- Leg swelling (in one or both legs) with, or without pain
- Medication reaction – skin rash, itching, vomiting, diarrhea
- Shortness of breath, chest pain – Call 911 and let our office know

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We are always available if you have any questions, please call 440-461-7999.