

## Questions?

Contact:

**The Nurse's Voice-**

**Mail Line at:**

**206-598-7535**

Monday - Friday

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

**After hours, call**

**UWMC Paging at:**

**206-598-6190**

to page the

Otolaryngologist on-call.

## Post-Operative Visits

You will be seen 7 to 10 days after surgery in the clinic to have your staples/sutures removed. This appointment will be made with you before you are discharged.

Additional follow-up appointments will be made with you at each visit.

## Return To Work

Most patients can return to work 1 to 6 weeks after surgery. Some patients may require other forms of treatment, such as radiation or chemotherapy. Most times, these treatments will start about 6 weeks after surgery. If this happens, your return to work may be delayed.

## Additional Education

You will receive detailed patient teaching while you are in the hospital to prepare you to care for yourself when you return home.

*After You Return Home, Call the Clinic Nurse or Doctor On-Call If You Have:*

- Bleeding, swelling or colored drainage from your wounds.
- Fever greater than 101 °F.
- Persistent nausea or vomiting.
- Rash or itching.
- Diarrhea or constipation.



# Head and Neck Surgery

*How to prepare for and what to expect of your operation*

**This pamphlet provides basic information about what to expect during your hospital stay and how to prepare for it.**

**The Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery**

**Service uses a team approach to deliver care to**

**their patients. Headed by surgeons, the team**

**includes nurses, medical assistants, patient care**

**coordinators, respiratory therapists, speech**

**pathologists, physical and occupational**

**therapists, dietitians and social workers. Together**

**they work to make your surgery outcome and**

**recovery as optimal as possible.**

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
**MEDICAL CENTER**

UW Medicine

**Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Center**

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**MEDICAL CENTER**  
UW Medicine

## How to Prepare for Your Head and Neck Surgery

### Before Your Surgery

- Do **NOT** take aspirin, ibuprofen or similar products two weeks prior to your operation. These products thin the blood and slow clotting.
- **Alcohol** consumption can influence how much anesthesia you need and how the anesthesia will work for you. Alcohol also affects how your body uses pain medication. Please tell your nurse what alcohol you drink regularly, *even if you do not think it is significant*, so we can better care for you.
- **Pain medications**, taken on a regular basis, also influence how much anesthesia you need. Please tell your nurse what pain medications you take on a regular basis.
- **Discharge planning** begins before you have your operation. A social worker will speak with you prior to your surgery about arranging care you may need after you are discharged from the hospital.

### 24 Hours Before Surgery

A nurse will call you the afternoon before your operation to tell you **where** and **when** to come to the hospital. The nurse will answer your questions and remind you:

- Not to eat or drink anything after a certain time.
  - Whether to take your regular medications.
- If you have not received this phone call by 5:00 p.m. on the afternoon before your surgery, please call **206-598-6334** and talk to the Pre-Surgery nurse. Patients scheduled for Monday surgeries will be called the Friday before by 5:00 p.m.

## What to Expect After Your Operation

Your hospital stay will vary according to your type of surgery. Here are some common things you may expect.

### Hospital Stay

You may require a 1- or 2-night stay in the Intensive Care Unit after your surgery. You will then be transferred to our non-ICU unit, usually 4-Northeast. This is a major surgery and recovery time will vary from person to person. You will have good days and bad days as you heal. This is normal. Lots of swelling in the face and neck area is normal for the first days and weeks after surgery.

### Tubes and Drains

- You will have an IV line for fluids and delivery of pain medicine. Let the nurse know what your pain level is, so you can be kept comfortable during your stay.
- A feeding tube will provide daily nutrition until you can take food normally.
- Drains are usually placed in the neck area during surgery to relieve swelling. They are removed 3 to 5 days after surgery.
- The surgical incision is held closed with staples that will be taken out 7 to 10 days later.

Visiting hours on non-ICU units are 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily.