

Laser Stapedotomy

What to expect and how to prepare

Laser stapedotomy is a surgery to rebuild the parts of the middle ear that conduct sound. In this surgery a laser is used to create a small hole, then the stapes (stirrup bone) is bypassed and replaced by a prosthesis (a man-made part).

This handout explains how to prepare for your operation and how to plan for your recovery.

2 Weeks Before Your Surgery

Medicines

Do **not** take any aspirin or aspirin-like products for 2 weeks before your operation, unless told to do so by your doctor.

The Day Before Your Surgery

Arrival Time

The pre-surgery nurse will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your surgery. If you are having surgery on a Monday, the nurse will call you the Friday before. If you do not hear from the pre-surgery nurse by 5 p.m., please call **206-598-6334**.

The pre-surgery nurse will tell you when to come to the hospital and will remind you:

- Not to eat or drink after a certain time
- To arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery
- Which of your regular medicines to take or not take
- To sip only enough water to swallow your pills

After Your Operation

Safety Precautions for 24 Hours

Because you may have general anesthesia or a sedative, do **not** do these things for 24 hours after surgery:



You must arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery. You will not be able to drive yourself or take a bus or taxi.

24 HOURS

For your safety and the safety of others, do **not** do these things for 24 hours after your surgery:

- Drive or travel alone
- Use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers
- Be responsible for the care of another person

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Ear Dressing

- You will have packing in your ear after surgery and a cotton ball at the opening of your ear.
- If your ear bleeds, call the clinic.
- **Do NOT take any of the packing out of your ear. You may remove the outer cotton ball the day after surgery.** Your doctor will take out the packing at your follow-up clinic visit in 1 month.

Pain Medicine

You will be given oral antibiotics and medicine for pain. Take these medicines as prescribed. You should have very little discomfort.

Eating

You can usually begin to eat and drink in the evening after your procedure. You may feel a little nauseous from the anesthesia or sedative.

Nose-blowing and Sneezing

- Do **not** blow your nose for 3 weeks. If you need to get mucus out of your nose, sniff it back and then spit it out.
- If you sneeze, do so with your mouth open. Do not hold your nose when you sneeze, since this will increase the pressure in your ear.

Bathing

You must keep all water out of your ear until your doctor tells you it is OK to get it wet. You may wash your hair after surgery, but put a cotton ball that is coated with Vaseline in your ear first. Remove the cotton ball after you wash your hair.

Do not go swimming until your doctor tells you it is OK.

Hearing

Your hearing may come and go during the first 4 weeks after surgery. You may hear cracking or popping in your ear. It may sound like your head is in a barrel. All of these things are normal.



Do **NOT** blow your nose for 3 weeks after your surgery.

Vertigo

Vertigo is a condition that can make you feel dizzy, lightheaded, and off-balance. It might even feel like the room is spinning. Vertigo could occur after your surgery.

Please call the nurse if you have vertigo and it is getting worse after you go home.

Return to Work

Most people can return to work 1 week after this surgery. How much time you take off may depend on what you do for a living. Your doctor will tell you if you need to take more time off.

Travel and Activity

You may need to limit travel and other activities after your laser stapedotomy. Ask your health care provider what guidelines to follow.

Follow-up Visits

- You will have your 1st follow-up visit 1 month after surgery to check your ear and remove the packing. This visit is on:

| DAY | DATE | TIME |
|-----|------|------|
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- Your 2nd follow-up visit will be to test your hearing. This will be 3 months after surgery. This visit is on:

| DAY | DATE | TIME |
|-----|------|------|
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Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

**UWMC Otolaryngology –
Otology and Audiology:
206-598-7519**

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the Otolaryngology Resident on call to be paged.

Call the Clinic Nurse or Doctor on Call if You Have:

- Bleeding from your ear
- Fever higher than 101.5°F (38.6°C)
- Signs of ear infection:
 - Increased redness
 - Swelling
 - Pain
 - Drainage
- Dizziness that will not go away
- Nausea or vomiting
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit