

Mastoidectomy

How to prepare and what to expect

This handout describes what to expect when having mastoid surgery, how to prepare for your operation, and how to plan for your recovery.

What is a mastoidectomy?

The *mastoid* bone is at the base of the skull, just behind the ear. A *mastoidectomy* is surgery to remove part of this bone.

This surgery may be done when the ear is infected, but the infection has not gone away after being treated with antibiotics. Your surgeon will remove the infected tissue.

How do I prepare?

- For 1 week before your surgery, do **not** take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting. Two of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, and others) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn, and others).
- Starting 48 hours before surgery, do **not** use a razor to shave any part of your body. We want to avoid skin cuts on the day of surgery.
- During your pre-op the nurse will remind you:
 - Not to eat or drink after a certain time.
 - Which of your regular medicines to take or not take.
 - To sip only enough water to swallow your pills.



The mastoid bone is just behind and under the ear.

Your Ride Home

- **If you are discharged the same day as your surgery:** You will need a responsible adult to take you home from the hospital. This person may drive you, or take a bus, taxi, shuttle or other transportation with you. **You cannot travel by yourself.**
- **If you stay overnight in the hospital:** You may drive yourself home the next day.

Day Before Surgery

- **Shower:** Take a shower the night before your surgery:
 - Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body.
 - Do **not** use the antibacterial soap on your face and hair. (See directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair.
 - Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothes.
- **Arrival time:** A Surgery patient care coordinator (PCC) will call you by 5 p.m. the day before your surgery. If you are having surgery on a Monday, the PCC will call you the Friday before. If you do not receive this call by 5 p.m., please call **206.598.6541**.

Day of Surgery

At Home

- **Fast:** Follow the nurse's instructions about not eating and drinking.
- **Shower:** Take another shower with the antibacterial soap. Follow the same steps as you did the night before.
- **Medicines:** Follow the instructions the nurse gave you about which medicines to take or not take. Remember to sip **only** enough water to swallow your pills.

What to Expect After Surgery

For Your Safety

For 24 hours after surgery, do **not**:

- Drive a vehicle or travel alone
- Use machinery
- Drink alcohol
- Sign any legal papers or make important decisions
- Be responsible for children, pets, or an adult who needs care

Dressing

- Keep the outer dressing in place for **2 days**.
- You may adjust the strap if the dressing is uncomfortable.
- If the outside of the dressing becomes bloody, you may return to clinic for a dressing change.
- **Do NOT take any packing out of your ear.** Your doctor will remove the packing at your next clinic visit.
- Keep your ear dry until your doctor says you can get it wet.

Pain Medicine

- **For mild to moderate pain:** Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). Follow the dose instructions on the label. Alternate taking Tylenol and ibuprofen every 3 to 4 hours.
- **For severe pain:** Take the pain medicine (opioids) your doctor prescribed. Take **only** as prescribed.

Eating

- You can usually eat and drink in the evening on the day of your surgery.
- You may have an upset stomach from the *anesthesia* (the medicine you were given to make you sleep during surgery).

Activity

- Do **not** blow your nose for 3 weeks. If you need to get mucous out of your nose, sniff it back and then spit it out.
- If you sneeze, keep your mouth open. Do **not** hold your nose. This will blow air into your ear.

Return to Work

Most people can return to work 3 days after surgery. Your return to work may depend on what kind of work you do. Ask your surgeon if you have any questions about when you can safely go back to work.

Follow-up Visits

You will have a **follow-up visit 1 to 2 weeks after surgery**. At this visit, we will remove the *inner* packing from your ear and check your wound.

Your 1st follow-up visit is:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Your doctor will tell you about any other follow-up you may need, such as a hearing test.

When to Call

Call the clinic or your doctor if you have:

- Bleeding from your ear
- Fever higher than 100°F (37.8°C)
- Increased redness, swelling, pain, or drainage from your ear
- Nausea or vomiting that will not stop

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Otology Voice Mail Line at 206.598.7519. We will return your call as soon as we can.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.4022 and press 5 when you hear the recording. You will be directed to the Community Care Line Nurse.