

## Middle Ear Surgery

### *What to expect and how to prepare*

*Middle ear surgery is done to repair the eardrum (tympanic membrane) or small hearing bones (ossicles) in the middle ear. These may be repaired using either man-made material or natural tissues. The purpose of this surgery is to restore your hearing.*

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

### **2 Weeks Before Your Surgery**

- Do not take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 2 weeks before your surgery.
- This is a day (outpatient) surgery. You will not stay overnight in the hospital. You must arrange for a ride home after your surgery. You cannot drive yourself or take a taxi or bus home alone.



### **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**.

*You must arrange for a ride home after your surgery. You cannot drive yourself or take a taxi or bus home alone.*

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

## What to Expect After Your Surgery

### Ear Dressing

- You will have packing in your ear after surgery.
- Keep your ear dry until your doctor tells you it is OK to get it wet.
- **Do NOT take out any of the packing from your ear.** Your doctor will take it out at your follow-up clinic visit.

### Medicines

- You will be given medicine to take by mouth for pain. Most patients have very little discomfort after this procedure.
- You will receive ear drops to put in your ear. These will help the packing dissolve. Do not put anything into your ear except these ear drops.

### Eating

- You can begin to eat and drink in the evening after your procedure. But, you may be a little nauseous from the anesthesia you received.

### Precautions and Self-Care

Because you may have received general anesthesia, do **not** do these things for 24 hours after your surgery:

- Drive
- Drink alcohol
- Travel alone
- Sign any legal papers
- Be responsible for the care of another person

### Activity

- If you sneeze, be sure to do so with your mouth open to reduce pressure in your ears. Also, do not hold your nose when you sneeze.

### For 1 month after your procedure:

- Do **not** blow your nose. If you need to get mucus out of your nose, sniff it back and then spit it out.
- Do **not** go swimming or dive into water.
- Do **not** fly. The altitude changes can harm your ears. It is OK to use elevators.



Do **NOT** blow your nose for 1 month after your surgery.

## Return to Work

Most people take 1 week off work to recover from this surgery. Your doctor will tell you if you need to take more time off.

## Follow-up Visits

- You will have a follow-up visit 1 month after surgery to check your wound. This visit is on:

DAY	DATE	TIME
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- Your 2nd follow-up visit will be 6 to 8 weeks after surgery to test your hearing. This visit is on:

DAY	DATE	TIME
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## When to Call the Clinic Nurse or Doctor on Call

Call the clinic nurse or doctor on call if you have:

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

### 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.

## Notes and Questions

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