

Stapedotomy

What to expect and how to prepare

Stapedotomy is surgery to rebuild the parts of the middle ear that conduct sound. In this surgery, 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.

How to Prepare

- Do **not** take any aspirin or aspirin-like products for 2 weeks before your operation, unless told to do so by your doctor. (See attached sheet.)
- Do not shave any part of your body that you do not already shave every day. If you normally shave near your surgical site, do **not** shave that area for 2 days (48 hours) before your surgery.
- This is an outpatient surgery. You will go home the morning of your operation. You must arrange for a ride home. You may not drive yourself.

24 Hours Before Your Surgery

- **Take 2 showers:** Take 1 shower the night before, and a second shower the morning of your operation. 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 clothing.

- **Arrival time:** The pre-surgery nurse will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your operation. 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

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Leave the packing in your ear after surgery. Your doctor will take it out at your follow-up clinic visit.

What to Expect After Your Operation

Precautions

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

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

Ear Dressing

You will have packing in your ear after surgery.

If your ear bleeds, call the clinic. **Do NOT take out any of the packing from your ear.** The packing will be removed by your doctor at your next clinic visit.

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 the evening of your procedure. You may feel a little queasy from the anesthesia.

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 it with your mouth open. Do not hold your nose when you sneeze, since this will increase the pressure your ear.

Hearing

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

Return to Work

Most people can return to work 1 week after 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.

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.

Appointments: Call Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Center, 206-598-4022.

Established patients with questions about your treatment plan: Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Nurse Voice Mail Line, 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.

Follow-up Visit

Your follow-up visit will be 7 to 10 days after surgery, on:

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Travel and Activity

You may need to limit travel and other activities after your stapedotomy. Ask your provider what guidelines you should follow.

Call the Clinic Nurse or Doctor On Call If You Have:

- Bleeding from your ear
- Fever higher than 101.5ºF (38.6ºC)
- Signs of ear infection:
  - Increased redness
  - Swelling
  - Pain
  - Drainage
- Ongoing dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

Notes

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