



**Richard L. Weiner, M.D.**

## **Craniotomy: Post-Operative Instructions**

### **Incision Care**

- Keep incision dry until your post-operative office appointment
- You may shower, but try to avoid getting the bandage wet.
- Change bandage after each shower or if bandage gets wet or soiled: remove existing bandage and replace with gauze and tape.
- If you note excessive bloody drainage, yellow or green drainage or foul smelling drainage, please notify our office.
- Notify our office if you begin to experience excessive swelling, redness or pain at the incision site.
- You may get incision wet following removal of scalp staples. Your staples will be removed at your 2 week post-op appointment.

### **Pain Management and Medications**

- Prescriptions for pain medication will be given to you at the time of discharge from the hospital. Take the medication as directed on the prescription bottle. Do not drive, operate machinery or drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication.
- Narcotic pain medication may cause significant constipation. It is recommended that you drink plenty of fluids and eat high fiber foods (fruits, vegetables and whole grains).
- If constipation becomes a problem, you can take Miralax which is available over the counter at your pharmacy. Take as directed on the bottle. If you have not had a bowel movement within 5 days of your surgery, please notify our office.
- An ice pack may be used at the operative site as needed to reduce swelling and pain.
- In some cases, you may also be given prescriptions for anti-seizure medication and steroid medication, to prevent brain swelling. Take the medication as directed on the prescription bottle.
- Possible side effects of steroid medication may include, but are not limited to: GI upset, appetite changes, skin flushing, insomnia, mood swings, anxiety and elevated blood sugar levels. If you are diabetic, please check your blood sugar regularly. If you begin to experience bothersome side effects, please notify our office.
- Pain medication will not be refilled after office hours or on weekends. Office hours are Monday-Thursday 8:30-5:00 and Friday 8:30-12:30.

### **Activity**

#### **First Week:**

- It is common to feel some fatigue following surgery. You may be up and around the house as tolerated.
- It is recommended that you take a nap or at least rest in the morning and again in the afternoon.
- No lifting greater than 5 pounds, no house work and try to avoid straining.
- Sleep with head elevated on 2 pillows, unless instructed otherwise.
- Avoid driving or riding in a car.
- No sexual activity.

### Activity (cont.)

#### Second Week:

- You may start short walks outside, weather permitting (avoid excessive heat). Have someone accompany you on your walk.
- Continue to avoid heavy lifting, straining or housework.
- Continue to refrain from sexual activity.
- No driving until released to do so by your surgeon.

#### Third Week:

- Gradually increase activity as tolerated.
- May begin driving short distances, unless instructed otherwise.
- May resume sexual activity.

#### Fourth Week:

- Continue to increase activity.
- May drive unrestricted, unless instructed otherwise.
- May return to work if released to do so by your surgeon.
- May resume light housework.

### Call Our Office if You:

- Feel pain uncontrolled by prescribed pain medication.
- Uncontrolled nausea or vomiting.
- Experience fever of 101 degrees or higher.
- Notice increased swelling, redness or drainage from your incision.
- Have difficulty breathing or chest pain. If severe please call 911.
- New onset of confusion, memory loss, severe headache, speech abnormalities, numbness or weakness, vision abnormalities or seizure.

**There is an “on call” physician available after office hours and on the weekends 24 hours for urgent matters. Please call our office at 214-750-3646 and the answering service will notify the physician on call. Please be available for the physician to call you back at the number given to our answering service. Please note that the call back may be seen on your caller id as “unknown caller” or “blocked number”.**

### Follow-Up Appointment

Your first post-op appointment will typically be 2 weeks following your surgery. If your appointment time was not scheduled prior to surgery, please call our office to schedule. Phone number 214-750-3646.

### Return to Work

Return to work varies with the type of occupation and will be discussed at your follow-up appointment.