



# CommunityENT

EAR • NOSE • THROAT • ALLERGY

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## **Mastoidectomy Post Operative Instructions**

### **What is a Mastoidectomy?**

This operation involves an incision behind the ear to gain access to the mastoid cavity through the temporal bone. Usually, a mastoidectomy is performed for chronic ear infections or to remove cholesteatomas. Cholesteatomas are pockets of dead skin that can build up in the ear. Over time they can cause damage to other structures causing permanent hearing loss, neurological issues or balance problems.

### **How should I prepare for my ear surgery?**

You should discontinue any aspirin or anti-inflammatory medications for 10 days prior to the surgery, this includes certain supplements such as fish oil and omega-3. If you are on any blood thinners, you will need to consult with the surgeon and the prescribing physician on how to discontinue those medications before surgery. Prepare to be off work for a few days after your surgery. Heavy lifting is not allowed for 4-6 weeks after surgery.

You will not be able to fly for 1-2 months after the surgery. You should not make any plan for airline travel until you have followed up with your surgeon.

### **What are the possible complications?**

The most common complications are ear bleeding and ear infection.

Although this surgery typically improves hearing, the middle and inner ear structures are extremely delicate and any surgical manipulation can cause hearing loss that is permanent.

The ear is an important part of your balance system. Any surgery in the ear may result in vertigo or imbalance that may be temporary or permanent.

The chorda tympani nerve is a nerve that controls taste. It goes through the middle ear. It can be damaged during ear surgery and cause a change in taste, which can be temporary or in rare cases permanent.

Facial paralysis, although very rare can occur during ear surgery and can be permanent.

The ear is separated from the brain by a thin plate of bone, this can be damaged, causing a spinal fluid leak into the ear. This can necessitate further surgical repair.

### **What can I expect after surgery?**

Your hearing will be blocked and decreased for several weeks. If you have stitches, typically they will absorb over time behind the ear. You may experience numbness around the stitches. You may have ear pain, pressure or a headache.

You will have some packing in your ear and a pressure bandage over your ear.

### **What do I need to do at home**

You can eat and drink normally. You should avoid alcohol while taking pain medication. You will get a prescription for pain medication. If you are taking this medication you cannot drive a car. You can use Tylenol for pain.

You should avoid any water exposure until approved by your surgeon. When showering, place a vaseline covered cotton ball in your ear to seal the canal and keep your ear canal dry.

You should not do any heavy lifting, strenuous exercise, try to “pop” your ears by holding your nose or nose blowing for at least 4-6 weeks. If you have to sneeze or cough, open your mouth.

Your surgeon may start ear drops. He/She will advise you on when to start the drops.

### **When do I f/u with my doctor?**

Typically the first follow up appointment is between 4-6 weeks.

### **When should I call my doctor?**

Call the Office if:

- If you have any drainage coming from the ear
- If you notice any weakness in your facial muscles
- If you have dizziness or vertigo that is debilitating
- Fever greater than 100.5
- Signs of infection: redness around the ear, foul smelling drainage, swelling or increased pain

