

Craniotomy/Brain Tumor Surgery Discharge Instructions

Follow-up: If you were not already given an appointment for follow-up, call to schedule an appointment with your surgeon in _____ days or _____ weeks.

- ⊖ You have sutures or staples that need to be removed.
- ⊖ Your sutures are absorbable and do not need to be removed.
- ⊖ You will require a follow up CT scan prior to your first visit.

Dressing: You may remove your dressing _____ days after surgery. You may shower and shampoo at this point but do not rub the incision. Do not immerse incision site in water. Do not put any skincare products on the incision unless specifically instructed to do so. Until your follow-up visit, it is imperative you maintain good personal hygiene.

Diet:

- You may resume your pre-operative diet.
- Advance your diet slowly, especially if you are still experiencing some nausea from the anesthesia.
- If you are diabetic, keep your blood sugar as normal as possible as diabetics have a significantly greater chance of getting a wound infection following surgery. Call your **family physician** if you are having trouble controlling your blood sugar.

Return to Work:

- ⊖ You may return to light work not involving excessive bending or lifting (no greater than 8 pounds or the weight of a gallon of milk) in _____ weeks.
- ⊖ Please call the office or wait until your first appointment to check with your surgeon prior to returning to work.

You may want to consider limiting work to part time at first. Heavy lifting of greater than 25 pounds should be avoided until the 4 to 6 week mark.

Activity:

- You should be as active as possible but **listen to what your body is telling you. Use good judgment and common sense.**
- You may need to rest for an hour or two each day the first few weeks. Fatigue is normal depending on the nature of the procedure.
- You may ride in a car but you should not drive a car or heavy machinery for _____ days. Before you return to driving, you must be off narcotics. You may not return to driving if you have had a seizure.
- Walking is an excellent exercise and you may walk outside if weather permits. Increase the distance you walk every day if possible but listen to what your body is telling you.
- You may climb stairs.
- Sexual relations are permissible three weeks after surgery.
- You may resume sports in 2 to 3 months. Please check with your surgeon first. Start ALL activities slowly and begin with stretching or warm-up exercises.
- Avoid pulling, pushing, or lifting unduly heavy objects.

- You may need to have Physical Therapy arranged to begin immediately after discharge, please check with your surgeon.

Medications:

- You may be discharged with steroid medication to limit brain swelling. Follow the directions carefully for steroids and do not deviate from the prescribed course.
- Resume your previous medications but check with your surgeon before resuming any blood thinners (i.e. Plavix, Aspirin, Coumadin, Pradaxa, etc.).
- Please take your pain medicine only as prescribed.
- Your doctor will prescribe medication for pain and/or possible muscle spasm after your discharge.
- Narcotic pain medication may produce constipation. You may need a stool softener and these may be purchased over the counter (i.e. Miralax, Senekot ,X or Peri-colace).

What to Expect:

- You may have some headaches but they should not be severe.
- For brain tumor patients, typically your pathology should be back at the time of your first visit although there are exceptions. We will help coordinate care with your oncologist, radiation oncologist, and family physician if need be.
- Our website may help with information about tumors. The address is www.pnsi.org.

Call your surgeon if:

- You notice fever or chills and have a temperature of over 101 degrees.
- Your incision turns red and or starts to drain more than 10 days from your surgery.
- You have severe or worsening headaches after the surgery.
- You have a seizure; notify our office and call 911.
- Tenderness or swelling in one or both calves.
- Shortness of breath or chest pain.
- Cloudy or foul smelling drainage.
- Any new weakness.
- You have not urinated more than 12 hours after discharge.

24 Hour Office Phone Number: 301.797.9240

Office Website: www.pnsi.org

Do Not Smoke: Smoking has been shown to slow the healing process and increase your chance of infection. It can also limit the fusion process if you've had a fusion or bone graft. If you need help quitting you can call the Washington County Health Department at 240.420.1796 and ask about their stop smoking classes. Your primary care doctor can also help with medications or patches.