



## **Post-Operative Care and Instructions for Parotidectomy**

### **What to expect:**

1. The typical period of face/throat pain is about 10 to 14 days
2. Difficulty swallowing is sometimes seen, as there is a “full” feeling in the upper throat/and or face.
3. In general, the first few days are the worst, and then there is gradual improvement.
4. Some hoarseness can be expected for several days. This is generally due to the breathing tube (endotracheal tube which was placed in the airway during the anesthetic procedure). The placement of the breathing tube may cause swelling of the vocal cords as a side effect.
5. There may be a drain in the wound for several days. This should produce a discharge during that period of time. The drain is removed on the first to third postoperative day, depending on how much drainage there is.
6. A post-operative antibiotic will be prescribed for at least a week after the operation.

### **Diet:**

1. For the first day, fluids are best- avoiding any solid food.
2. Typically starting on the second day, it is best to eat soft foods that do not require a lot of chewing and are easy to swallow. These would include mashed potatoes, scrambled eggs, milk shakes, oatmeal, etc... You can advance to a regular diet after the first 2 weeks as you desire.

### **Activity:**

1. After discharge from the hospital, you should remain at home for the first week. Lifting any heavy things (over 25 pounds) should be avoided. Sleeping on three pillows to elevate the head above the heart is encouraged. No sports should be undertaken for at least two weeks, and for the next 2 weeks, only mild exercise at that. No contact sports should be participated in for a month or more. Avoid getting the wound wet for the first week. Bathing is better than showering. Don't soak the wound. It is ok to get the wound wet for short periods of time after that.
2. It would be a good idea to sleep with your head elevated above your heart for the first 3-5 days. This will help reduce the post-operative swelling. This can be done by sleeping in a reclining chair or against the arm of a couch.
3. Leave the dressing over the wound until you are instructed to remove. This is usually 24 hours after the drain is removed.



**Pain control:**

A prescription pain medication will be given for the first week. Generally, a refill will be included for the second week, if needed.

**Things to observe:**

1. Parotidectomy includes a risk of injury to the nerves that move the face. Approximately 30% of patients will have some weakness of one or more of the branches. If your eye will not shut, then there is a risk of dryness of the cornea of the eye. “Gen Teal Ointment” can be obtained OTC, despite the blurriness, should be used when ever the eye feels dry. The eye lid may need to be taped shut at night for sleep. Generally we expect post-operative swelling of the wound over the face or jaw, but if there is increasing redness or unexpected swelling of the wound (particularly around day 4-6), then an infection may be suspected and Dr. Doucet should be notified.
2. Fever is usually observed in the first day or two, but should remain below 101.5° F. If your fever is higher than this, please notify our office.