

## Neurosurgery

# Going home after a skull base procedure

The neurosurgery team will make sure you're safe to be discharged. You may be reviewed by a physiotherapist and occupational therapist.

## Removing your stitches

Contact your local practice nurse (at your GP) to arrange for your stitches or clips to be removed.

If there are any difficulties arranging this, please contact the ward. If you need more support, we'll refer you to the integrated discharge team.

## Going home from hospital

Arrange for a family member to collect you from hospital when you're discharged.

## After the procedure

After the procedure, you may experience some symptoms of impaired facial nerve function. These symptoms will improve or disappear as you recover from surgery:

- facial weakness
- incomplete eye closure
- dryness or excess fluid in the eye
- alteration of taste



### **Facial weakness**

The team may give you some advice regarding any facial weakness. They may also refer you for specialist therapy input when you're discharged from hospital.

Very occasionally facial weakness develops some weeks after discharge, most commonly about 2 weeks, but can happen up to 6 weeks after surgery.

This delayed onset weakness usually recovers quickly. It's best managed by a short course of steroid tablets taken along with antacids to protect your stomach. You can obtain these from you GP.

Please contact skull base nurse you have any concerns on 024 7696 5326 for advice (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

### **Eye care**

If you have facial weakness after surgery, you may have difficulty closing your eye. If this is the case, you may be referred to an eye specialist.

It's very important that you take care of your eye after surgery.

If your eye does not close or blink properly, it's at risk getting infected. We may prescribe you eye drops and eye ointment to use at home to keep your eyes moist.

If your eye becomes red, sore, or irritable, tell your GP or your ophthalmologist. This could be the start of an eye infection and may need treatment.

### **Swallow and speech**

After the procedure, you may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- swallowing difficulties
- changes to your speech, such as difficulty clearly producing sounds because of facial weakness
- changes to the clarity and strength of your voice

If you experience these symptoms, you'll be assessed by a speech and language therapist. They'll give you advice on how to manage swallowing safely and to improve your voice quality.

### **Headaches**

Headaches are common after this procedure. They're easily managed and should disappear completely as you recover.

Contact your GP for urgent advice or go to A&E if:

- your headaches persist and are not relieved by painkillers
- light hurts your eyes
- you have a stiff neck
- you are vomiting

### **CSF leak**

While you're in hospital, the team will monitor you closely for leaks of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) from your nose, ear and wound.

When you're discharged, it's unlikely that a CSF leak will develop.

Contact your GP or Ward 43 for advice if you have a leak of clear, salty, fluid from your nose, ear or wound.

## Patient Information

To prevent a CSF leak:

- avoid any activity that may raise the pressure in your head for the first 4 weeks
- prevent constipation by taking a laxative to reduce risk of straining while opening your bowels
- avoid heavy lifting
- avoid strenuous exercise or weight training

## Tiredness

It's normal to feel tired after the procedure. Make sure you get enough rest.

Avoid strenuous exercise for 4 weeks. Increase the level of exercise you do gradually.

## Flying

Avoid travelling by plane for 3 months after your surgery. Please talk to your neurosurgeon before flying.

## Driving

Inform the DVLA if you had surgery as you will not be insured.

Contact the DVLA after surgery for more advice on driving.

## Informing your GP

We'll give you a discharge letter upon discharge. An electronic copy of this will be sent to your GP.

The letter will inform your GP of the details of your surgery and any medicines you've been prescribed.

## **Outpatient follow-up**

Your surgeon will want to review you in the outpatient clinic. Your appointment date will be sent to you by post.

## **Returning to work**

It's usual for people who have had this surgery to remain off work for 3 months. We will issue you a sick note for 4 weeks.

Contact your GP to make an appointment to assess your ability to return to work.

## **Support group and charities**

### **Meningioma UK**

[www.meningiomauk.org](http://www.meningiomauk.org)

Telephone: 01787 374084

[enquiries@meningiomauk.org](mailto:enquiries@meningiomauk.org)

### **The Brain Tumour Charity**

Support and Info Line: 0808 800 0004

### **Macmillan Cancer Support**

Telephone: 0808 808 0000

[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 5326 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

### Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

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[www.uhcnhs.uk/feedback](http://www.uhcnhs.uk/feedback)



#### Document History

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