

## Post-operative information for patients following Head and Neck skin lesion surgery under day case local anaesthesia

### What to expect

- The local anaesthetic lasts for 2-3 hours. After this time you may experience some discomfort. Most patients find that a simple pain killer (such as paracetamol) is sufficient to control their discomfort. Ensure you follow the instructions on the packet.
- Your wound may bleed following the operation. Please try to remain calm if it does – it is not unusual. Sit upright and place a clean pad over the area, then apply firm pressure for 10-15 minutes. Time this and do not remove the pad to check the wound until at least 10 minutes have passed. Repeat this if necessary, and if the bleeding will not stop or is severe (after applying pressure for 15 minutes twice), please use the contact numbers on page 2.
- You are likely to have some swelling and bruising to the area for a couple of weeks after the operation. This is normal and will gradually reduce.
- You will have numbness, and possibly some facial weakness initially because of the local anaesthetic, and this will improve as the local anaesthetic wears off. After this time you may still have altered sensation either immediately around the area, or distant from it, (depending on which nerves were involved with your skin lesion). Very often this improves in time. If you have concerns, please let us know.
- You may need to refrain from working and strenuous exercise until the area has healed. Your surgeon will provide you with the necessary documentation for your employer on request.
- You may have absorbable or non-absorbable sutures (stitches). Your discharge nurse will advise you if and when you need to have your sutures removed.

### What should you do?

- Keep the area clean and dry, as this will help to ensure that the wound heals well. This may mean that you cannot wash your hair or shave for approximately one week.
- Keep the original dressings intact, even if they have some blood on them. You may cover the dressing put on in hospital, but **please do not remove and replace it**.
- If your dressing falls off after a few days, and the wound is clean and dry there is no need to have a new dressing applied.
- If the area is very bruised, or swollen, try using a couple of extra pillows at night to elevate your head.
- If you have diabetes, try to keep your blood sugar well controlled.
- Please contact us if you have any concerns regarding how your wound is healing.

### Try to avoid

- Bending down (as much as possible) for the next 24-48 hours as this will cause increased pressure on the wound and increase the risk of bleeding.
- Alcohol (for 24 hours) after the surgery as this will increase the risk of bleeding.
- Taking aspirin (unless prescribed) for 24 hours after surgery, as this will increase the risk of bleeding.
- If you smoke, try not to after the surgery for at least 24 hours. Please avoid smoky atmospheres until the wound has healed. If you would like assistance and advice regarding stopping smoking, please ask any of our staff.
- Strenuous exercise for the next couple of weeks.
- Using any make-up around the area until the scar has completely healed.

### What about follow-up appointments?

- For the majority of patients we will not arrange a follow-up appointment in clinic. If we do not arrange a follow-up appointment we will write to you and your GP with the histology results (information about the lesion we have removed). If we have not advised you about your results within 6 weeks, please contact us.
- For some patients, we will arrange to see you in clinic following your operation to remove your stitches or check your wound and talk about the histology results. You may bring a friend or relative to your appointment if required.

### What is cause for concern?

- If the area around the wound gets more red rather than less in the days following the operation.
- If the wound develops a steady discharge (this may be clear, yellow, creamy, greenish, or possibly bloodstained) and may or may not smell offensive.
- If the discomfort you experience from the wound increases rather than decreases in the days following the operation.

**If you experience any of these symptoms, please contact the ENT clinic / your GP / a medical practitioner within 24 hours.**

### Useful contacts

- Ear, Nose and Throat (E.N.T.) Outpatients Clinic (for an emergency appointment) **01270 612206** Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays)
- Clinical Nurse Specialist ENT **01270 273621** (answerphone)
- ENT secretary (for advice or to make an appointment) **01270 273392**. Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm (excluding bank holidays)
- NHS Direct for out of hours advice **111**
- Your local GP / out of hours consortium
- Emergency Department (A&E)

This information is available in audio, Braille and other languages. To request a copy, please ask the Clinical Nurse Specialist.

This information has been reviewed by the Readers' Panel.

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