



Discharge Information and Instructions After Gamma Knife Stereotactic Radiosurgery for Patients with Trigeminal Neuralgia (TN)

What you may expect after the procedure

- Some swelling and/or bruising around the pin sites is common. Sometimes there is swelling around the eyes. This will usually get better within a few days after the procedure. You may apply a cool compress to the swollen area.
- Patients may experience headaches after the stereotactic frame is removed. The headaches should lessen within a day or so.
- Some patients find they tire easily for a few days after the procedure. While everyone reacts differently, most people feel back to normal within a few days.
- Some patients have numbness around the pin sites or on the top of the head that can last for a few weeks. The numbness will gradually go away, usually in approximately 2-4 weeks

Care of the pin sites

- Band-Aids will be placed on the front pin sites after the frame is removed.
- Wait 24 hours before showering or getting the pin sites wet. Avoid hairspray, mousse, gels, hair color, permanents, or anything which may cause irritation until the pin sites have completely healed.
- You can expect the pin sites to heal in 7–10 days.

Activity and rest

You may resume your normal activities unless your doctor has instructed you otherwise. Guide your activity by your progress and how you feel. If you feel tired or have a headache, stop and rest.

Medications

You can resume your routine medication schedule after your procedure, including your trigeminal neuralgia medications.

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Remember: The effects of Gamma Knife Radiosurgery are not immediate. It commonly takes weeks to months before trigeminal neuralgia pain begins to decrease or subside after the procedure. It is important to continue taking your trigeminal neuralgia medications as directed, even if your pain does begin to decrease. If you are pain free, TN medication tapering will be discussed with you at your follow up appointments and a tapering schedule provided. Do not begin tapering on your own.

If your pain temporarily worsens following Gamma Knife, as it sometimes does due to the episodic nature of trigeminal neuralgia flares, continue taking your TN medications as prescribed. You can discuss with your local prescribing physician if a temporary increase in TN medications is advised or can be tolerated.

When to call for help

- Severe or increasing headaches.
- If you have increasing weakness, changes in vision or changes in sensation (other than numbness around the pin sites or on the top of the head).
- If you have excessive sleepiness.
- Symptoms will vary depending on what part of the brain is being affected, so call if you experience any symptoms that are out of the ordinary for you.
- If you have signs of infection such as: redness, swelling, drainage, irritation at the pin sites, or fever of 100 degrees F for 24 hours or longer within two weeks of treatment.
- If you have any problems or concerns not answered here.

Whom and where to call

- If you have questions about medications ordered by your neurosurgeon or radiation oncologist, or new or persisting symptoms possibly related to your Gamma Knife procedure, you may call your neurosurgeon's office directly at (415) 353-7500. Someone will answer at this number 24 hours a day.
- If you have non-urgent questions related to Gamma Knife, please call the Gamma Knife nurse's voicemail at (415) 353-9325. A Gamma Knife nurse will check the voicemails once or twice a day, Monday through Friday.
- For non-urgent clinical questions, you may contact Marian Ward, MS, NP at (415) 353-2347, Monday thru Thursday

Follow-up appointments

You will be seen in the Neurosurgery Clinic in approximately 6-8 weeks following your Gamma Knife procedure. This appointment has already been scheduled for you. We will then continue to see you at regularly scheduled intervals at 6 months, 12 months, and then annually for 5 years post procedure. It is important that you keep these appointments so that we can monitor your progress and assess for sensory changes related to your radiosurgery procedure and assist you and your local physicians with TN medication management recommendations.