

## Discharge Information and Instructions after Microvascular Decompression Surgery for Hemifacial Spasm

The following guidelines are intended to answer common questions that you may have after surgery. Please ask your nurse or doctor if you have other questions.

### What to expect:

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- Swelling and/or bruising on your scalp or neck area are common after surgery. This usually disappears within 2–4 weeks after surgery.
- Some neck pain and headache can be expected after surgery. In most cases, these discomforts will gradually go away within a few weeks.
- Try not to keep your neck rigid to avoid the pain because this will only prolong the stiffness and aching. Gentle range of motion exercises of your head and neck every day is encouraged.
- Some patients may feel dizzy and have some imbalance after this operation. Remember to get up slowly. Walking and other non-strenuous physical activity will help your body adjust and will speed recovery of your balance.
- Feeling twinges of your hemifacial spasm within the first few weeks following surgery is common. There is often a "wind down" period and the final results from your surgery may not be realized until @ 6-12 weeks post operatively. If you continue to have intermittent spasms, your doctor will discuss this with you in greater detail at your post-op visit.

### Activity:

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- Avoid heavy lifting or straining in the first six weeks following your surgery.
- Walking is encouraged as much as possible. When you are tired or have a headache, stop and rest.
- Increase your activity gradually so that you are back to your normal routine 4-6 weeks after surgery. Guide your activity by your own progress. Sexual activity may be re-started as you feel able.

### Care of Incision with Absorbable Sutures:

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- Incisions heal best in a clean environment and primarily left alone. Always wash your hands with soap and water before touching your incision or touching your dressing.
- You may remove your surgical dressing 3 days following your surgery if it is still on when you leave the hospital.

- You do not need to have absorbable sutures removed. They will dissolve on their own. The glue covering the incision and sutures will also dissolve on their own in the coming weeks.
- It is safe to shower and get the incision wet 3-5 days after surgery. You may then gently shampoo hair and get incision wet daily. You may use your regular soap and shampoo.
- Do not directly rub the incision for 2-3 weeks following surgery.
- Gently pat the incision and area around incision dry. Do not blow dry the incision or area directly around incision.
- Small amounts of bleeding may occur as the wound is healing. Blot dry with a clean tissue and apply gentle pressure.
- The incision may be left open to air or you may loosely cover it with a small dressing. If you choose to cover your incision use a non-stick dressings and minimal adhesive tape around incision.

### **Medications:**

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Before you are discharged, be sure you understand how to take your medications. The pharmacist, nurse or doctor will review the medications with you.

### **When to call for help:**

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- Severe or increasing headaches, not responding to pain medication.
- Persistent nausea or vomiting.
- Severe or increasing stiffness in your neck.
- Clear watery drainage from incision area, nose, ear or down the back of your throat. This may mean you have a leak of cerebrospinal fluid.
- Drainage, pain, redness or swelling of the incision, or failure of the incision to close and heal.
- Fever higher than 101° F (38.5° C)

### **Who to call:**

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During regular office hours, Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, you may call our Neurosurgery Clinic office at (415) 353-2241 for assistance.

For assistance after hours, please contact the Department of Neurological Surgery at (415) 353-7500. This telephone number is able to receive calls 24 hours a day.

### **Follow up appointment:**

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A post-operative appointment has already been scheduled for you, approximately 4-6 weeks following your surgery. Please contact our clinic directly if you do not know the date and time or if you need to change this appointment.

#### **Neurosurgery Clinic**

400 Parnassus, 8th Floor  
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