

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

### What you may expect after the procedure

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- 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 go away within a few days.
- Some patients find they tire easily after the procedure. While everyone reacts differently, most people feel back to normal within a few days.
- Some patients experience numbness around the pin sites or on the top of the head following the procedure. This numbness will gradually go away, typically in 2-4 weeks

### Care of the pin sites

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- 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

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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

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Resume your routine medications after your procedure, including your trigeminal neuralgia medications.

The effects of Gamma Knife Radiosurgery are not immediate. It commonly takes weeks to months before trigeminal neuralgia pain begins to decrease or subside.

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It is important that you continue taking your trigeminal neuralgia medications as directed, even if your pain does begin to decrease in the early weeks following your Gamma Knife procedure. If you are pain free at your follow up appointment with our nurse practitioner, TN medication tapering will be discussed with you and a medication tapering schedule provided if indicated. Please do not begin tapering on your own.

Do not be alarmed if your trigeminal neuralgia 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**

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- Severe or increasing headaches, not relieved with medication.
- If you have signs of infection such as: redness, swelling, drainage, irritation at the pin sites, or fever of >101 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**

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- If you have questions related to your Gamma Knife procedure, 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 questions regarding your trigeminal neuralgia symptoms and medication management following your Gamma Knife procedure, you may contact the Neurosurgery Clinic at (415) 353-2241 and ask to speak with Mariann Ward NP. If she is not available, our office staff will help redirect your call appropriately.

## **Follow-up appointments**

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You will be seen in the Neurosurgery Clinic in approximately 3 months following your Gamma Knife procedure. This appointment has already been scheduled for you. We will then continue to see you annually for 5 years post procedure, and more often if needed. 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.