

Charles C. Rich, MD, PC

Intermountain Medical Center
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Park City Medical Center
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Discharge Information-Craniotomy

You are being discharged from the hospital today following a craniotomy. This sheet is to provide some information and guidelines for your care at home. A craniotomy is the medical term used for the surgical procedure to open the skull. Some problems (bleeding, tumor, aneurysm, increased pressure, etc) can cause the brain to not function correctly. Access to the brain is needed to correct these problems. A craniotomy provides this access. Your body will need time to heal from surgery. Plenty of rest, adequate sleep, and proper nutrition are essential to heal. Please do not smoke any cigarettes.

The top layer of staples/sutures used to close the incision should be removed 1-2 weeks following surgery. If you have been discharged from the hospital and the sutures/staples have not been removed, you will need to come to our office to have them removed (see appointment date/time). Keep your incision dry until the staples/sutures are removed. If the area does get wet, blot it dry and/or use a hairdryer (low heat) to dry the area. Any excessive scabs or dried blood that is around the staples/sutures can be removed by using ½ strength hydrogen peroxide (use equal parts hydrogen peroxide and sterile water—both can be found at any drug store, no prescription necessary). It is okay to put a small, thin layer of antibiotic ointment along the suture/staple line.

Keep a close eye on your incision for any signs of infection. These may include redness, swelling, tenderness, fever, or discharge from the incision. If any of these occur, or if you have any questions or concerns about the incision, please call our office promptly (801-507-9555).

You will be discharged with appropriate medicines or prescriptions for medicines. One cannot expect to be pain free after surgery. The medicines are meant to lessen, not eliminate, pain after surgery. The goal is to stop taking pain medications as soon as possible after surgery. Listen to your body and keep activity to a level that doesn't create excessive pain. Pain medications can cause drowsiness. You may also be on other medicines, such as steroids (to reduce brain swelling) and/or anti-seizure medications. Steroids can cause blood pressure changes, weight gain, stomach ulcers, an increased risk of infection, and mood changes. These are usually given in a "tapered" dosing schedule, decreasing the dose over time. Be sure to take them as directed. Anti-seizure medications can cause drowsiness and slight dizziness. It may be necessary to have your blood drawn to assure you are on the correct dose. You will most likely need to be on this medication until your first follow-up visit (discussed below). If you are going to run out of this medication, please call our office before running out. Some other pieces of information that would be good to keep in mind:

- Being fatigued is very common. You may feel well but may not have a lot of energy and/or stamina. That is okay. Your body is telling you it needs time to heal and recover. This usually lasts one to three months.
- Take it easy. You're okay to do short walks outside and maybe an errand or two but do not drive. No driving until you're seen at your follow-up appointment(s) and you are approved to return to driving.
- It is not uncommon to have "popping" or strange noises in your head. Emotional "roller coasters" are also common following brain surgery. These will likely decrease over time.

Your follow-up appointment is as follows:

Intermountain Medical Center (address above): _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Park City clinic (address above): _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Please call 801-507-9555 for appointment date/time.

Your staples need to be removed in ___ days; call for date/time.

If you have any questions or concerns relating to your surgery or condition, please call our office. Someone will help you or they will contact us and we'll call you as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Charles C. Rich, MD
Dave Kotter, APRN