Neurosurgery

Going home after Craniotomy and Clipping of cerebral artery aneurysm

This leaflet is intended to provide you with some useful information following your recent surgery. If you have any other concern, please speak to the nursing staff.

Your wound

- Your head (craniotomy) wound has been closed with metal clips which require removal five days following your surgery. This may be done prior to discharge; alternatively they can be removed by your GP or practice nurse once you are at home.
- You may find that the scar is tender or numb for some time following surgery. This is quite normal, but if it becomes inflamed or more painful you should consult your GP.

Headaches

- Headaches are quite common following surgery and some patients experience pain in the jaw, especially when chewing. This may take several months to settle down. If headaches do not improve with simple painkillers, seek advice from your GP.

Washing your hair

- You should not wash your hair while the clips are in place but it is safe to do so gently the day after the clips are removed.
- Avoid the use of hair dyes or perms for at least one month after the wound has completely healed.

Returning to work

- This varies with each individual.
- You should remain off work until you have discussed going back with your consultant at the outpatients clinic.
- Many people find it useful to go back part-time initially and gradually increase their hours as they feel able.
- You may find that you tire much more easily than before your operation, so do only as much as you feel able.
Driving

- The regulations regarding driving vary according to certain circumstances. You should inform the DVLA of your operation and should not drive until you have received their written approval. Surgery for a cerebral artery aneurysm does not necessarily mean that you will be prevented from driving in the future but you may be required to stop driving for a specified period of time. The DVLA will contact your consultant for information regarding your operation.

  The address to write to is:
  DVLA Drivers’ Medical Group
  Longview Road
  Swansea
  SA99 1TU
  Telephone number: 0300 790 6806

Exercise and sport

- You should continue to exercise as much as you feel able to. Start slowly and increase gradually.
- You may resume most sports as soon as you feel able but you should permanently avoid contact sports such as rugby. Check with your GP or consultant if you are not sure.

Sexual intercourse

- It is quite safe to resume a normal sex life.
- Women are advised to discuss pregnancy with their GP or consultant before starting or increasing a family.

Smoking

- Smoking is known to cause damage to all blood vessels including those within the brain. You are advised to stop smoking completely.
- Help is available, please ask the nursing staff.

Flying

- It is safe to fly after three months although you may experience headaches due to changes in air pressure.

Follow-up

- Unless you experience any problems, a routine follow up appointment will be sent to you for two to three months after your surgery.
- If you are worried or need advice regarding your operation, please contact the Clinical Nurse Practitioner on 01223 256981 or your GP.
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

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