

Craniotomy

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This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

A craniotomy is surgery to open your skull.

Before the Surgery

- If it applies, tell your doctor if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.
- Remove any jewelry or piercings.

Your Incision

- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. They can get wet in the shower. You may peel them off after 7 days.
- If you have staples, follow your doctor's directions.
- Follow any directions your doctor gives you.

What To Expect After Surgery

- You may have a headache for a few weeks. This is normal. Chewing may be uncomfortable for 1 to 2 months after surgery.
- The incision site may feel numb for a few months. This is normal.
- There will be some swelling and fluid collection. This will go away over time.
- Your hair may take a long time to grow back next to the incision. The incision will be covered by natural growth over the rest of your head within months. You may lose hair if you are having radiation or chemotherapy.
- Follow your doctor's directions on when you may wash your head, wear anything on your head or change your hair color.

Activity

- Your doctor will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work and have sex.
- Slowly return to your regular level of activity.
- Follow your doctor's directions for how much you can safely lift.
- Rest as needed.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

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Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your doctor gave you.
- Drink more liquids.
- Do not drink alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if you:

- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have a temperature higher than 101 F
- feel dizzy or lightheaded that won't stop
- have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge

- have an increase in neck stiffness
- have an increase in headache pain that does not respond to medicine
- have problems breathing
- are unable to get out of bed
- have nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

Call 911 if you lose consciousness (pass out).

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your doctor or specialist, even if you are feeling well.