Preparing for Your Head and Neck Surgery

It is normal to have questions about your surgery. This handout gives you information about what will happen before, during and after your surgery.

Before Surgery

- You may need to have some tests done before your surgery (blood tests, X-rays or other tests your doctor may feel are needed).
- You may have an appointment to see an anesthesiologist and a medical doctor for a history and physical before your surgery.
- Tell your doctor about any medicines you take to thin your blood or prevent clots. You may need to change these medicines or adjust the amount you take before your surgery. These medicines include:
  - Aspirin
  - Clopidogrel, brand name Plavix
  - Prasugrel, brand name Effient
  - Ticagrelor, brand name Brilinta
  - Apixaban, brand name Eliquis
  - Ticlopidine, brand name Ticlid
  - Warfarin, brand name Coumadin
  - Enoxaparin, brand name Lovenox
  - Dabigatran, brand name Pradaxa
  - Fondaparinux, brand name Arixtra
  - Rivaroxaban, brand name Xarelto
  - Cilostazol, brand name Pletal
  - Edoxaban, brand name Savaysa

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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• If you have a stent, do not stop taking your medicines to prevent clots without first talking to the doctor who put in the stent. For more information, ask a member of your health care team for the patient education handout on protecting your stent.

• If you take aspirin or medicines like aspirin for arthritis pain, your doctor may have you take a different medicine in the weeks before your surgery or procedure.

• Do not smoke for 2 weeks before your surgery. Smoking can slow the healing process and may extend your recovery from surgery.

• You will be called the afternoon the day before surgery to let you the time of your surgery and when you should come to the hospital.

• You will be told what time to stop eating and drinking the night before your surgery and how to prepare your skin for surgery.

Day of Surgery
You will be told when your scheduled admission date is and where to check in when you get to the hospital.

• Your family can stay with you until you go to the Pre-operative Holding Area.

• The nurse will check your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, breathing, temperature, weight), start an IV (a needle in your arm) and answer any questions.

• The nurse will tell your family where to wait while you are in surgery.

• You will need to remove dentures, partial plates, contact lens, eyeglasses, hearing aids or any other prosthesis.

• Nail polish and makeup should be removed before coming to the hospital. Jewelry, hairclips and other valuables should be left at home.

During Surgery
• A nurse will check your identification (ID) bracelet. Then you will be made comfortable on the operating room table.

• Your vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, pulse and breathing rate) will be watched closely.

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• You will be hooked up to a monitor to count your heart rate.

• A small clip (pulse oximeter) will be placed on your finger to measure your pulse and the amount of oxygen in your blood.

• Your doctor will tell you how long your surgery may take. If your surgery takes longer than you were told, it does not mean that anything is wrong. Your family will be updated on how you are doing.

After Surgery

• After your surgery is over, the surgeon or an assistant will call or come to the waiting area to talk with your family.

• After your surgery you will be taken to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU). As you come out of anesthesia, a nurse will watch you closely and take vital signs frequently.

• When you first wake up, you may feel cold and you may shiver. This is normal if you have had general anesthesia.

• Let your nurse know if you have any pain or discomfort. They can give you medicine to help control the pain.

• You may have one or more tubes in place after surgery. These may include:
  ▶ Oxygen tubing
  ▶ Intravenous (IV) catheter
  ▶ Drain tubes
  ▶ Foley catheter in your bladder
  ▶ Nasogastric (NG) tube

• Your incision may be covered with a dressing. The nurse will check your dressing and change it as needed.

• If you will be staying in the hospital after surgery, you will go to your hospital room once you are ready to leave the PACU.

• If you are having same day surgery you will be discharged from the Ambulatory Surgery Unit. You will be given information on how to care for yourself when you leave the hospital. These directions will include how to take your medicine, how to care for your incision, what problems to watch for during your recovery and any follow-up appointments.