

KAISER PERMANENTE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

**Post operative instructions for:  
Stapedectomy/Middle Ear Surgery**

**Activity:**

Keep water out of the ear for as long as your surgeon has directed.

Do not blow your nose for 2-3 weeks after surgery. If you must sneeze or cough try to do it with your mouth open.

Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds or engage in any strenuous exercise for 2 weeks after surgery.

Do not strain (e.g. when having a bowel movement) or bend over for 2-3 weeks after surgery. Avoid getting emotionally upset.

Keep your head elevated while sleeping for the first few days following surgery.

**Dressings:**

If an ear dressing is in place, you may remove it the next day following your surgery.

You may replace the cotton in the ear canal but do not disturb any deeper packing in the ear canal.

**Pain Management:**

Take medications as directed.

**Diet:**

Return to a normal diet as tolerated. Fluids are more important than food for the first 24-48 hours. Small amounts of clear liquids taken frequently are best. Avoid dehydration. If nausea is severe or persists after 24 hours, call your physician.

**It is normal to:**

Hear sounds of water or popping in the operated ear.

See small amounts of blood on the cotton ball.

Have numbness on the outer ear or behind it.

Have some slight unsteadiness after surgery.

Have moderate pain around the ear and jaw.

**Call your physician or an advice nurse if you have:**

1. Severe pain, imbalance or unrelieved nausea
2. Excessive bleeding or discharge
3. Elevated temperature (101 or above)
4. Drainage (pus or mucus) from the ear after 3-4 days.
5. Signs of infection such as red streaking at the surgical site, swelling or foul smelling discharge.

(postopmiddleear)