

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANT

A cochlear implant is a device that helps reverse nerve-related hearing loss. It can treat hearing loss that will not respond to hearing aids. The implant is implanted into the inner ear (cochlea). A few weeks after surgery, the device is activated and hearing is restored to varying degrees. Typically, one implant is placed. An implant can be placed in both ears if needed.

PREPARING FOR SURGERY:

- ▶ Be sure to tell Dr. Voelker about all the medication you take. This includes over-the-counter medicine, vitamins, herbs, and other supplements. You may need to stop taking some or all of them before surgery as directed.
- ▶ Follow all instructions you are given for not eating or drinking before surgery.

DAY OF SURGERY:

- ▶ An IV line is put into a vein in your arm or hand. This line delivers fluids and medicine.
- ▶ You will be given medicine (anesthesia) to keep you free of pain during surgery. You will have general anesthesia. This puts you into a state like a deep sleep during the surgery.
- ▶ The area around the implant site will be shaved.

DURING SURGERY:

- ▶ The surgeon makes an incision behind the ear. The mastoid bone is exposed. This is the bone you can feel behind the ear.
- ▶ The cochlear implant is placed inside a hole made in the mastoid bone.
- ▶ The surgeon makes an opening in the cochlea, in the inner ear, and places electrodes. The electrodes connect to the implant.
- ▶ The skin incision behind the ear is closed with sutures.
- ▶ If an implant is being placed in the other ear, this may be done at this time.

AFTER THE SURGERY:

- ▶ You will be taken to a recovery room to wake up from the anesthesia. You may be sleepy and nauseated at first. And you may feel dizzy. You will be given medicine to manage any pain. You may then be taken to a hospital room to stay overnight, or you may go home the same day. Once you are ready to go home, you will be released to an adult family member or friend. Have someone stay with you for the next couple of days to help care for you as your healing begins.

HOME CARE:

Recovery time varies for each person. Dr. Voelker will tell you when you can return to your normal routine.

- ▶ You will be prescribed an oral antibiotic, take as directed. **Do not** wait for the pain to worsen before you take it.
- ▶ Do not drive until you get Dr. Voelker's clearance. Never drive when you are taking pain medicine.
- ▶ Care for incisions as instructed by your healthcare provider. Ask your doctor when you can bathe and wash your hair.
- ▶ **DO NOT:**
 - ▶ Do not drive.

FOLLOW-UP CARE:

- ▶ You will have a **7-10 day** follow-up appointment with Dr. Voelker to check that your incisions are healing well. Stitches will be removed **7-10 days** after the surgery. About **3-6 weeks** after surgery, once the incision has healed, the outer part of the implant is attached behind your ear. This will allow the device to work. Make follow-up appointments as directed by our staff. Speech and hearing specialists will help you adjust your implant.

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RISKS AND POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS:

Some risks of cochlear implant surgery include:

- ▶ Bleeding
- ▶ Infection
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Vertigo (spinning sensation) that lasts up to **6 weeks**
- ▶ Tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in your ears)
- ▶ Numbness around ear
- ▶ Changes in sense of taste
- ▶ Facial nerve injury
- ▶ Damage to nerves and blood vessels at or near the incision site
- ▶ Leakage of cerebrospinal fluid
- ▶ Device failure
- ▶ Rejection of the implant by the body
- ▶ Risks of anesthesia