

**Heartland Neurosurgery**  
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## **Postoperative Care- Craniotomy**

1. The incision in your head should require very little care. If you are discharged from the hospital with a dressing over the incision remove it within one to two days. It is best to leave it open to air. Do not apply any ointments or lotions to the incision. It is best to keep the incision clean and dry.
2. DO's
  - . Do get plenty of rest, eat a well balanced diet, and drink plenty of fluids.
  - . Do moderate exercise such as walking.
  - . Do take a quick shower. Wear a shower cap or cover the incision with plastic wrap before the shower and remove it afterward. Do not stand with the shower hitting the incision directly. Be sure to dry the area by gently patting dry with a towel or blow drying the area on cool or low.
  - . Do take prescribed medications for pain as indicated and necessary, don't wait for pain to become intolerable.
  - . If you were prescribed anti-seizure medication be sure that you understand the medication instructions that you are given and follow those instructions faithfully.
3. DON'Ts
  - . Don't immerse in water.
  - . Do not rub or scratch the incision.
  - . Do not drive until approved by provider. A driving test may be required at the discretion of your surgeon. Even though you may feel fine, your peripheral vision and reflexes may have been affected, and we want you to be safe on the road for yourself as well as others.
  - . Do not lift anything over 10 pounds until approved by physician.
  - . Do not take any medications which will "thin the blood" such as aspirin, coumadin, anti-inflammatory agents, plavix, heparin, and aggrenox until authorized by your provider.
4. Expected recovery time and release to go back to work depends on your job and healing time. This decision will be made by your provider.

5. Call the office at 319-226-9888 immediately if any of the following occur:
  - . Temperature greater than 101.5 degrees and you know you don't have a cold or the flu.
  - . Any chills or stiff neck.
  - . Any severe change or increase in your pain or new weakness.
  - . Any new decreased sensation, numbness or tingling in arms and/or legs or face.
  - . Any redness or drainage from the incision or drain sites.
  - . Any seizure or seizure-like activity
  - . Confusion, fainting, blacking out, extreme fatigue, memory loss, or difficulty speaking.
  - . Double or blurred vision or loss of vision, partial or total.
  
6. Follow-up in the office in about 7 to 10 days with the nurse for suture/staple removal. You may wash your hair with a mild shampoo (baby shampoo) 24 hours after suture removal unless instructed otherwise. You will be given an appointment to follow up in about three weeks with the physician assistant/nurse practitioner. An appointment should have been made for you by the nurse when you left the hospital, if not, call the office at 226-9888 to schedule an appointment. If you have any questions regarding your appointment please call our office Monday- Thursday 8:30-12:00 or 1:00- 4:30 and Friday till noon.
  
7. **X-rays-** You may have been given an order form when you left the hospital to get a CT or MRI of your head prior to your appointment. Be sure and get that done prior to your appointment. If your CT/MRI is not done at Covenant, Allen, ADI or United Medical Park be sure to pick up the **CD** of your study to bring with you to your appointment. If you have any questions please call our office.
  
8. Please check your prescription medications. If you are getting low and will need a refill, please call our office before 11:00am **Tuesday** or **Wednesday** and your refill will be called in to the pharmacy sometime that afternoon. **NO** prescriptions will be called in on Fridays as the physicians, PAs and NPs are in surgery all day during this time.