

Cochlear Implant Surgery

While cochlear implant surgery is relatively minor compared to some other types of surgery, it still involves general anesthesia, and doesn't seem minor when it is happening to us. Below are some helpful pointers culled from many people who have had cochlear implants. Of course, your surgeon may have some preferences for how you prepare for surgery, and for what you should do during the recovery period. You should always rely on your doctor for medical advice.

PREPARING FOR YOUR OPERATION

Questions to ask your surgeon:

- How many CI surgeries has the doctor done?
- How many CI surgeries has the doctor done with the particular implant you have chosen?
- What has been the outcome, from the doctor's experience, with how the patient hears at activation?
- What will surgery be like?
- How long is surgery?
- Will I need to stay overnight in the hospital after surgery?
- What medication will I need to take after surgery and for how long?
- What are some of the comments from other CI patients about how they feel after having surgery?
- Will I need someone to stay with me after I return home?
- What are my physical limitations once I return home and for how long will I need to do them?
- When may I drive or fly?
- Will I hear anything out of the ear that gets an implant after surgery?
- When can I wash my hair after I have CI surgery? Do I need to keep the incision dry?
- Do you suggest using staples, stitches, or glue to close the incision?
- How much weight should I limit myself to after surgery and for how long?

CHECKLIST FOR GOING INTO THE HOSPITAL

You will have someone drive you to the hospital and take you home after surgery. Take the following with you to the hospital:

- Slip-on shoes or so you don't have to bend over
- Button up top so you don't pull anything over your head. You will have a large pressure bandage with ear protection. Many wear pajamas so they can go home and relax.
- If you wear glasses, remove the arm on the incision side. You can wear glasses after surgery, but don't let the arms touch the incision site.
- Discuss with your doctor if you take prescription medication that would normally be taken on the day of surgery.
- Cell phone charger, in case your stay is longer than expected.

What should you take in the car? Depending on how far you live from the hospital these suggestions may make your ride home more comfortable:

- Have some water and soda crackers just in case your stomach is a little sensitive.
- Bring a couple of soft pillows to rest your head so you can relax and rest on the way home
- Have a small blanket to cover up with if you need it.

THINGS TO HAVE READY AT HOME TO USE AFTER YOUR SURGERY

- Prepare some soft food meals to eat after surgery in case your jaw or stomach are sensitive. Yogurt, soup, jello, popsicles, ice cream, scrambled eggs or protein shakes
- Prepare the place you will be resting/sleeping when you return home. Sleeping with your head elevated is sometimes suggested to help alleviate swelling.
- For some patients that have balance issues after surgery it may be helpful to not lay down flat.
- Be careful if you do have balance issues so you won't fall. This is important if you get up suddenly after laying down.
- If you have balance issues after surgery, it may be helpful to not lay down flat. Be careful if you do have balance issues so you won't fall. This is important if you get up suddenly after laying down.
- The pain medication you receive at the hospital may make you drowsy and not as alert so be very careful and if you need assistance walking, ask for it.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your surgery once you are at home, don't hesitate to call the hospital and get advice.
- Take your prescription pain medication according to instructions. You don't have to be a hero. It is much harder to get back on track if you've stopped taking your medication because you felt OK, then went downhill.

The recovery period:

- Ask your doctor how long you should plan to recover before returning to work or school.
- Most doctors advise against lifting even moderately heavy weights after surgery.
- Find out what your doctor suggests you do when you have to sneeze. Trust us, you really want to be prepared for that!

For further questions and information you can contact our Secretary, Shirley Edwards by SMS 0499 213 561 or email info@cicadaqld.com.au