

Patient information factsheet

After a craniotomy

We've given you this factsheet because you have recently had a craniotomy at Wessex Neurological Centre. It contains useful information and advice that you will need to follow when you return home.

Your consultant is:

Wound care

Keep your wound clean and dry. If you have a dressing over it leave it in place.

You are able to have a bath or shower but you will need to keep your wound dry until your sutures or clips are removed.

You can wash your hair with a mild shampoo once any clips or sutures are removed.

You may also experience some numbness and tingling around the wound. This is normal and may last a few months.

Check your wound daily for any signs of infection, such as:

- any leakage from the wound
- increased redness or swelling
- any increasing pain around the wound site

If you experience any of these symptoms, or if you have a high temperature or any other concerns, please contact the ward.

Clips and sutures

Clips or sutures are usually removed in hospital five to ten days (sometimes longer) after surgery. Some people may be able to go home before their clips are removed. In this case, we will give you a letter and explain when you will need to make an appointment with your GP to have the clips removed.

If you have subcuticular (buried) sutures these will dissolve over time. You may also have Steristrips over your wound. These will peel away with time or can be removed with the clips or sutures.

Medication

When you leave hospital we will give you a supply of medication to take with you. You will need to arrange any repeat prescriptions through your GP.

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Please continue to take your pain relief once you are home as you may continue to experience headaches for a while after the surgery.

If you are sent home with any medication ensure you finish the prescribed course and do not stop taking this unless advised to by our doctors.

There is sometimes a wait for medicines to arrive from the hospital pharmacy. We will try to ensure this delay is as short as possible for you.

Alcohol

Check the labels on your medicines for advice on whether you should avoid alcohol.

Driving

You must inform the DVLA and your insurance company about your surgery, as there may be restrictions on your driving as a result.

Work

The timing of your return to work depends mainly on how you feel and what you do for a living. It is not unusual to be off work for about six weeks.

Follow-up appointments

We will send you a letter in the post about your follow-up appointment in the outpatient department if you didn't receive one as an inpatient.

Symptoms to look out for

Contact your ward on the telephone number at the end of the factsheet if you experience:

- worsening headache
- any new or worsening weakness to limbs
- any new problems with your speech
- drowsiness
- fits or blackouts (if you haven't had these before)
- neck stiffness or pain
- discharge from your wound
- a fever or high temperature

Anti-embolism stockings

When you leave hospital, you will keep wearing your white anti-embolism stockings both day and night for at least two weeks and until you have returned to the level of mobility that is usual for you. You should check your skin daily. The stockings should not be removed for longer than 30 minutes.

It is important that the stockings are removed and reapplied correctly on a daily basis. If you are unable to do this it may be safer not to go home with stockings.

Leaving hospital

During your stay the nursing staff and other healthcare professionals will start to plan your discharge (when you leave hospital) with you. Your surgical team will decide when it is safe for you to leave hospital. A member of the therapy team may also assess you. Our multidisciplinary team may need to discuss any specific arrangements you need.

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On the day of your discharge you will need to arrange for someone to collect you from the ward at the time advised by your nurse.

We recommend that you arrange for someone to be at home with you when you are discharged from hospital.

Contact us

Southampton General Hospital main switchboard: **023 8077 7222**

Neurological regional transfer unit (C level): **023 8120 4844**

DVLA medical enquiries helpline: **0870 600 0301**

DVLA website: **www.dvla.gov.uk**

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.