



## *What to Expect After Cochlear Implantation*

### ***Taking Care of the Ear:***

A dressing is placed over the incision and ear to prevent swelling and keep the site clean. You can wash the incision with mild soap 2-3 days after surgery. *Absorbable stitches*, if present, do not require removal, and usually dissolve within five to seven days. If the stitches are not covered with tape, apply an antibiotic ointment 2-3 times a day for two weeks.

The incision will have some slight redness and swelling. If the swelling gets worse after a few days, or the incision becomes redder or extremely painful, call your doctor. Drainage from the incision or fluid collecting under the incision is never normal and should be referred to the doctor immediately.

If an “ear-cup” dressing was used, it can be removed tomorrow morning. If it is not uncomfortable, it should be worn at night for a week to keep from lying on the ear. It is normal to experience some dizziness and/or nausea and vomiting after surgery due to the drilling in the inner ear. This usually resolves within 24 hours, but may last a few days. If the dizziness worsens after a few days, call your doctor.

An abnormal or metallic taste in the mouth is common, and is usually temporary. On rare occasions, it can be permanent but becomes less bothersome over time.

Swimming is not allowed until your surgeon says it is okay.

### ***Dealing with Pain:***

Mild intermittent pain *may* occur during the first two weeks, particularly above or in front of the ear, when chewing. If the skin around the surgical area is sensitive, it may be covered with several fluffed-up gauze pads for cushioning. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen products (Motrin, Advil) can be used as directed. Pain medicine may be prescribed as well.

### ***Things Not to Worry About:***

A *hoarse* or *abnormal voice* may occur for several days from the anesthesia tube. *Numbness* of the skin around the surgical incision is common, and should gradually subside within several days or weeks. *Popping* or *clicking sounds* may be heard, along with a feeling of *fullness* or *liquid* in the ear; these will resolve gradually as the healing process continues. A mild degree of *dizziness* may be present on head motion, and is not of concern unless it increases. *Taste disturbance* and *mouth dryness* may occur for a few weeks.

### ***When to Call the Doctor:***

(1) *discharge from the ear* that is more than a little blood, or shows signs of infection (yellow color, foul odor, or high fever), (2) dizziness becomes worse, not better, (3) the skin *around* the sutures becomes swollen, red, or very tender (please note that some redness of the incision itself is normal), (4) the stitches break or the incision begins to open up, or (5) you or your child seem to be getting worse-not better-as the days go by. Your doctor will arrange a postoperative visit to check the healing process and remove sutures (if necessary).

### ***For Questions or Emergency Care:***

Call the office at **601-984-5160**. You may need to speak with the doctor on-call.