



P 303-783-8844 | F 303-783-2002 | cbsi@cbsi.md

Craniotomy/Cranioplasty Post Operative Instructions

How to take care of my incision:

- On postoperative day 3, you may remove any remaining dressings and wash your hair with shampoo; **avoid conditioner or shampoos with conditioners.**
- Take care when brushing/combing hair.
- Wash the incision daily with soap/water and pat dry.
- Do not apply any creams, ointments, or hair products for 6 weeks.
- Avoid hair treatments for 6-12 weeks.
- Protect your incision from the sun, but **do not apply sunscreen** until your incision is well-healed (~6 weeks); if you wear a hat, place a dry square of gauze between the incision and the hat to keep the incision clean.
- If you wear glasses, and any part of the incision is in contact with them, place dry clean gauze over the area to minimize transfer of dirt, oil, or bacteria.
- No prolonged submersion of incision for 6 weeks; avoid hot tubs.
- Call the office with any signs of infection, including fevers; incisional redness, swelling, and/or drainage; or increasing tenderness or pain.

What are my restrictions?

- Continue taking any anti-epileptic agents (Keppra (levetiracetam), Dilantin (phenytoin), etc.) as directed on your hospital medication reconciliation; if you have a history of seizures pre- or postoperatively, do not discontinue anti-epileptic agents unless you have been so directed by your neurosurgeon, physician assistant, or neurologist.
- Depending on your particular case, you will be instructed to avoid driving for a period of 6-12

weeks; this will be determined at your postoperative visit(s).

- Avoid blowing your nose.
- Avoid strenuous activity/exercise; light walking is encouraged.
- No lifting greater than 10 pounds.
- Avoid bending as much as possible.

What post operative conditions should I expect?

- You will notice some swelling beneath the skin in the area of the incision; mild swelling and tenderness are expected and normal. Typically, this is followed by migration of swelling and bruising to the area around one or both eyes as well as the face. This occurs as a result of postoperative fluid moving dependently (with gravity) from the operative site as you spend more time upright; this fluid will be slowly reabsorbed by the body.
- Some patients notice a “clicking” sound or sensation at the bone flap site. This will resolve as the bone heals, which takes approximately 6-12 months.

Diet

- Eat a regular diet as tolerated.

How to deal with constipation:

- Increase fluid intake.
- Increase physical activity (walking).
- Eat fiber-rich foods.
- Recommended over-the-counter medications include Colace (twice daily), Miralax (once or twice daily), magnesium citrate, milk of magnesia, Senna, suppositories, and Fleets enemas.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can send an email to cbsi@cbsi.md, send us a message through your secure patient portal, or give us a call at 303-783-8844.



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What medications can I take?

- Avoid taking any NSAIDS for 2 weeks postoperatively.
- Take prescriptions as instructed on prescriptions/bottles.
- Please monitor your refills closely and allow 3 business days for refill requests to be processed.
- Opiate prescriptions must be picked up at the office, or may be mailed, but cannot be called into pharmacies due to government regulations.
- If you have been discharged with changes to medications prescribed by other providers (PCP, cardiologist, rheumatologist, neurologist, pulmonologist, etc.), please follow-up with the respective provider for further recommendations.
- Per our office policy, which is guided by government policy, we are only able to provide prescriptions for 3 months postoperatively; should you require medications thereafter, we will recommend pain management specialists to follow-up with if your PCP is not comfortable providing refills.
- Please have your pharmacy fax non-opiate prescription refill requests to us directly at **303-783-2002**.

Emotional Recovery

Surgery places stress on the body's reserves. Feelings of tiredness and discouragement are normal as preoperative symptoms slowly subside. Prescription pain medications can alter sleep patterns, bowel movements, and emotional responses. A positive attitude and patience are needed for successful recovery from any surgery. You will find that each day you will feel a little better.

Your recovery is unique, as you are a unique person. By preparing ahead of time, you will feel more at ease with the entire surgery process.

When can I return to work?

- This will be determined on an individual basis during your post operative appointments, and will take into consideration your work duties and requirements. We will fax letters of Release to Return to Work to employers once dates and restrictions are determined.
- If you have additional short-term disability paperwork that needs to be processed by our office, please mail or fax it to us as soon as possible, and allow up to 30 days for completion. The first set of short term disability forms will be completed free of charge. If you require additional forms for your job, there will be a \$25 charge for each additional set. No long-term disability paperwork will be processed by our office. Please consult our website at www.cbsi.md for additional information on these policies.

Follow up with CBSI:

You will follow up with a physician assistant or your surgeon. Please call our office if you have any questions, our office phone number is **303-783-8844**.

Follow up with your other providers:

- If you have been discharged home with oxygen, please follow-up with your primary care provider for further recommendations.

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- If you have been discharged with a urinary catheter, please follow-up with Urology or your PCP.

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