

After Your Brain Tumour Surgery

Care at Home

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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Recovery

Recovery will take time and patience. Rest, healthy eating, regular exercise, and a positive attitude will help. You may also find it helpful to talk about your experience with someone or join a support group.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your neurosurgeon or brain tumour nurse:

> Phone: 902-473-5443

Follow-up:

Things to watch for

Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- › Redness or drainage from the incision. This may be a sign of an infection or a leak of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).
- › Chills and fever (temperature above 38 °C/100.4 °F). This could be a sign of infection.
- › Swelling, redness, or tenderness in your calf or thigh. This could be a sign of a blood clot or deep vein thrombosis (DVT). These are common in people who have had brain tumour surgery.
- › Shortness of breath. This could be a sign of a blood clot in your lung. This is called a pulmonary embolism (PE).
- › Trouble seeing or talking, or new weakness in your face, arm(s), or leg(s).
- › Seizure. This may range from mild twitching of your face, arm, or leg without loss of consciousness, to total body shaking with loss of consciousness.

For more information, read the pamphlet *Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)*:

- › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1141

After Your Brain Tumour Surgery

Before you go home

Staples or stitches

- You must make an appointment with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) to have your staples or stitches removed on: _____ (date).
- You have stitches that dissolve (go away on their own). It will take about 3 to 4 weeks for them to dissolve fully.

Activity

- You may feel tired for the first several weeks after you go home. This is normal.
- It is important to exercise and stay busy. This will help with your healing. Do more activities slowly over time.

For at least 2 weeks (14 days):

Avoid straining, bending at the waist, high impact exercise (like running), and heavy lifting (over 10 pounds). You can have sex when you feel well enough.

Driving

- Can drive
- Cannot drive

Taking care of your incision (cut)

- Try not to touch your incision. Leave it open to the air. This will help it heal.
- You or your support person should check your incision every day. Contact your primary health care provider if you have redness, swelling, or drainage.

Washing your hair

- You may wash your hair 2 to 3 days after your surgery. Use a mild shampoo.
- Using a clean towel, gently pat the incision dry (**do not rub**).

Eating and drinking

- You may go back to eating regular meals.
- Follow *Canada's Food Guide* to help you make sure you are getting the nutrition you need to stay healthy:
 - › <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Alcohol

Alcohol can:

- › hurt your brain and change the way it works.
- › make the side effects of some medications worse.
- › raise your chance of having a seizure (brief, abnormal, excessive [too much] discharge of electrical energy in the brain).

Do not drink alcohol until you are recovered.

Talk with your primary health care provider before drinking.

Medication

- You may have started taking a medication called dexamethasone (Decadron®) before or after your surgery. This is a steroid which helps to lower swelling in your brain caused by the tumour.
- For more information, read the pamphlet *Use of Steroids (Dexamethasone/Decadron®) for Patients with a Brain Tumour*:
 - › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/nsccp0048
 - › Keep a list of all of the medications you are taking. Give a copy of this list to all of your health care providers.