

Free Fibula Flap Post-Operative Instructions

What can I expect after surgery?

The hospital stay is between 3-14 days. Patients will be in the ICU located on 5D. Patients will be in the ICU for 2-4 days and are usually sedated (asleep) for 24-48 hours.

- You will have a breathing tube and will be on a ventilator for 24-48 hours.
- You will have a JP drain in the affected leg and 1-2 JP drains placed in the neck during surgery. The JP drains are only temporary and will remain for about 1 week after surgery.
- You will have a Foley catheter (to drain your bladder) that will be removed when the patient is moved from the ICU to a regular floor and the patient is up and walking around.
- You will have a feeding tube called a dohoff tube (tube placed in the nose) or a Peg tube (tube placed in the abdomen). The dohoff tube is only temporary and used for nutrition and medications while the incision site heals. The dohoff tube is usually in place for 2-4 weeks.
- Patients will be taught to administer tube feedings while at home.
- Take nothing by mouth until given the OK by the surgeon.
- Some patients will receive a skin graft, then they will have a splint on the leg for 5 days. A skin graft will also have a clear bandage covering over the donor site on the thigh and will fall off on its own.
- The hospital staff will be doing Doppler checks (checking for a pulse) in the lower leg, neck, and mouth every hour for the first 24 hours then every 2 hours for the next 24 hours and then every 4 hours after while hospitalized.
- Some patients will have a tracheotomy. If you do have a tracheotomy, it is only temporary and usually necessary for 4 weeks to 6 months.

Are there diet restrictions after surgery?

- Some patients may need to pass a swallow study before the dohoff tube is removed or being allowed anything by mouth.
- Before discharge from the hospital a dietician will discuss nutrition needs.

How do I manage pain after surgery?

- Some medications taken prior to surgery may be discontinued and some new medications may be added until the dohoff tube is removed.
- Pain is managed with a combination of pain killers. Each person tolerates pain differently and therefore pain management is individualized to your needs.

What follow-up care will I receive?

- You will be given an appointment to return to clinic for a post-operative check before you are discharged from the hospital.
- Bring any questions you have to this appointment. If you are unable to keep the appointment, please be sure to call and reschedule.

When should I call my doctor?

- If you have chest pain, lightheadedness within the first 48 hours or upon standing.
- If you have difficulty breathing inability to swallow.
- If you have persistent vomiting.
- If you have progressive low neck pain.
- If you have an oral temperature over 100.5 degrees. Check to make sure they are getting enough liquids. Dehydration can cause the body temperature to rise.

Who should I call if I have questions?

- (734) 936-5950, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- After hours and on weekends, call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon on call.

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