

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Admission Advice for Patients with a Brain Tumour (Craniotomy)



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You have been admitted to hospital with a suspected brain tumour. This is an abnormal collection of cells which will continue to grow and possibly cause headaches, seizures, visual disturbance, speech difficulties and/or limb weakness.

It is therefore essential that you have an operation to reduce the size and accurately diagnose the type of tumour you have.

Following examination, the medical staff will discuss your operation including its benefits and risks and you will be asked to give your consent. You will also be seen by an anaesthetist who will discuss your anaesthetic. If any further tests are required this will be discussed as necessary, as will any additions to your medication.

Preparation for theatre

Most of our patients will be given a date for theatre on admission however, it is often difficult to give an exact time due to possible unforeseen emergencies. The nursing staff will endeavour to keep you informed and ensure you are prepared for theatre in accordance with your care plan which is contained in your personal file.

You will be asked not to eat or drink for several hours prior to theatre and to take a bath or shower. If the anaesthetist has prescribed a pre-med you will be given this at the appropriate time.

Your operation

You will be taken to theatre by a nurse from the ward who will stay with you until you are under anaesthetic.

Your operation is known as a craniotomy. In order to gain easy access and to prevent infection it is necessary to shave a small area of hair. This will be discussed with you prior to theatre and carried out once you are asleep. The surgeon will make an incision through the scalp in order to access the tumour in your brain.

A biopsy of the tumour will be sent to the laboratories for testing, however it may take up to a week to get the results. This will be explained by the doctors.

Your wound will be closed with metal staples which will be removed 5-7 days after your operation.

On return to the ward

On return to the ward it is likely that you will be given oxygen via a mask and you will have a drip to ensure you remain hydrated. You will undergo frequent routine observations which include blood pressure, pulse and conscious level tests. This will continue until you are fully awake and your condition is stable.

You may have a small drain coming from your wound which helps to reduce swelling. This is normally removed 24-48 hours after surgery.

It is common for you to experience some discomfort therefore we will ensure you are given pain relief and medication for sickness. You are encouraged to ask for further analgesia if your pain persists.

Having recovered from your operation and depending on your condition you will be encouraged to start eating and drinking and mobilising around the ward. The nurses and doctors will continue to monitor your progress closely and discuss your treatment plan. Depending on the results of your biopsy further treatment may be required. If this is necessary the doctors will discuss this with you and your family.

This leaflet is only a guide as each patients condition and treatment may differ.

We hope to make your stay in hospital as comfortable as possible. If you have any queries about issues raised in this leaflet please ask any of the doctors or nurses involved in your care.

Written by the Neurosurgical Patient Information Group

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