



VANCOUVER ISLAND  
NEUROSURGICAL FOUNDATION

# My Shunt Surgery

The Surgery Team has prepared this insert containing discharge information to help you and your family after surgery. It has information about what you can do after your surgery.

Please visit the Vancouver Island Neurosurgical Foundation website for more health information: [www.vinf.ca](http://www.vinf.ca)

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Reviewed: July 28/2016



## Discharge Instructions – Shunt Surgery Patients

### What can I eat and drink after my operation?

- After your surgery you might not be hungry and a large meal may not sit well in your stomach. Try eating small meals until your appetite improves and then eat what you normally would eat.
- If you feel sick to your stomach you can get anti-nausea medication from your pharmacy without a prescription (i.e. Gravol). Take it as directed and drink fluids until the nausea is gone. If the nausea continues, see your family doctor.

### What activities can I do?

- Avoid lifting more than about 4.5 kg (10 lb).
- You can start being active by walking around your house. You may experience some mild headache or dizziness but this is normal and will gradually go away.
- During the day, avoid lying in bed or sitting for long periods of time by getting up every 30-60 minutes to walk.
- Stop playing sports, including walking on a treadmill or using a stationary bicycle until you have seen your surgeon at your follow up appointment in 6-8 weeks.
- At your follow up appointment, your surgeon will let you know when you can return to sports and work.

### When can I drive?

- If you had a seizure, your Driver's license may be suspended and you may not drive until you have been cleared by the Ministry of Transportation. You should work with your family doctor for reinstatement of your Driver's license.
- If you haven't had a seizure, then there are no restrictions and you may resume driving when it is safe.
- You will not be able to drive right after your surgery. Check with your nurse before you go home from the hospital for more advice. You should not drive if you are tired, on narcotics, or if you have problems with your vision.

### How do I take care of my dressings (bandages) & wounds?

- Keep both your head dressing and abdominal dressing on for 5 days, then remove them and DO NOT put on another dressing.
- Do not wet your head incision or your abdominal incision for 5 days and keep the dressings and incisions clean and dry at all times.
- Do not be alarmed by the bruising or swelling around wounds.
- Do not use lotions, powders or oils on the incisions.



- The nurse should provide you with a staple remover before you leave the hospital. Call and make an appointment with your family doctor who should remove the staple 10 - 14 days after your operation.

#### When can I shower or bathe?

- You may shower or bathe tomorrow but do not wet your head or abdominal incisions for 5 days.
- After 5 days, you may wet your head and abdomen, and lightly pat dry your wounds.
- Keep your incisions clean and dry.
- DO NOT take a bath, swim or use a hot tub for at least 6 weeks.

#### How do I cope with my pain?

- A mild headache is normal; you can take Tylenol Extra Strength 1 - 2 tablets every 4 - 6 hours as needed.
- If you are given a prescription, take it to a pharmacy to get it filled and follow the directions for taking the medication.
- Take a stool softener every day while you are taking narcotics. If you have not had a bowel movement after 2 days, take a laxative which you can get from a pharmacy without a prescription.
- It is normal to have some pain after your surgery but the pain should get better with time.
- You can ask your family doctor to prescribe a milder pain medication and to assist you in weaning off your pain medication. It is better to slowly reduce the medication over time rather than stopping it suddenly.

#### What about other medications?

- If you were on blood thinners and stopped taking them for your surgery, speak to your surgical team about when to restart them.
- If you have been given a prescription, take it to get filled at a pharmacy and take the medications as instructed by the pharmacist.
- Continue with any other medications you were on before surgery.
- If you have any questions about medications or dosages, have them answered by your nurse or surgical team before leaving the hospital.

#### When can I return to work?

- Before you leave hospital, talk to your surgeon about when you may be able to go back to work. A graduated return to work may be best in some cases.
- At your follow up appointment, your surgeon may confirm that you can return to work.

#### When should I call my family doctor?



- Within 1 week of going home, call your family doctor to make an appointment for your stitch or staple removal.
- Your family doctor can check your incision and remove stitches or staples 10 - 14 days after your surgery.
- Call your family doctor to renew or change your pain medication prescription or to talk about any other health issues.

#### What should I do if I develop a problem?

- Go to Victoria General Hospital's Emergency Department (preferred) or the nearest hospital emergency department, if you have:
  - A decreased level of consciousness
  - Severe headache not helped by Tylenol
  - Continuous vomiting
  - Seizures
  - Any changes in your vision.
  - Fever ( $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) or you notice any signs of infection in the incision.
  - Increased redness, swelling, leaking of pus or pain from the incisions.
  - If you notice increased swelling with pain in your legs, or difficulty breathing.

#### When is my follow-up appointment?

- Call your surgeon's office below to make an appointment for 6-8 weeks after your surgery.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Surgeon:

- Dr. Evan Frangou
- Dr. Stephen Hentschel
- Dr. Richard Reid

- Dr. Daniel Warren
- Dr. Oliver Ayling
- Dr. John Sun

Special instructions for me:

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For Dr. Daniel Warren, Dr. Oliver Ayling, Dr. Evan Frangou and Dr. John Sun's office:

**Location:** 106-1411 Cook Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0E8

**Phone:** 778.265.6677

**Fax:** 778.440.6677

For Dr. Richard Reid's office:

**Phone:** 778.405.2167

**Fax:** 778.265.8706

For Dr. Stephen Hentschel's office:

**Location:** 103-284 Helmcken Rd, Victoria, BC, V9B 1T2

**Phone:** 778.405.1224

**Fax:** 250.383.3608

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