Craniotomy Precautions

Caring for Your Incision after Head Surgery

Follow the guidelines below for 2 to 4 weeks to help protect your head and incision (the surgery wound).

**General guidelines**
- No heavy activity.
- Do not lift, push or pull anything that makes your head feel full or increases headache.
- During activity, do not hold your breath.
- Stop activities that cause pain around your incision or make nausea or headache worse.
- Keep your head higher than the rest of your body.
  - Do not bend too far forward.
  - Do not let your head rest below your body for more than a few seconds.
  - When lying down, always prop up your head with pillows. Do not lie with your head flat.

**Protecting your head and incision**
- Do not lie on your incision.
- Do not blow your nose, but gently dab under it.
- If you wear glasses: the bow of your eyeglasses should not touch the area where you had surgery. Remove the bow as needed.

**Showering and grooming**
- Take care combing your hair to avoid pulling at the incision with a comb or brush.
- Wait 3 days after surgery to shower and shampoo, unless your doctor told you otherwise.
- Use gentle shampoo, such as baby shampoo, until your head has healed.
- Do not scrub near the incision; gently clean by patting the area.
- Do not soak your head (hot tub, bath or swimming) for the first 30 days.
- Avoid hair products that may irritate your incision.

**Returning to activity**
Your energy level may be low at first.
- Take rest breaks and shorten activities if needed.
- Do light daily activities as you are able: walking, going up and down stairs, or light chores.
- Talk to your doctor before returning to exercise that requires great effort (such as running or tennis).
- **Do not drive** until your doctor says it’s okay.

Always follow your doctor’s instructions. If you have questions, call your doctor.