

Carotid Endarterectomy: Returning Home

After your carotid endarterectomy, you may be sore and feel more tired than usual.

That's normal.

Your throat may be sore for a few days.

As you heal, the incision and the area around it can be sore, numb, swollen, and bruised.

This should get better with time.

When you feel like you can, try doing some easy things around the house, such as light housework or cooking.

But don't lift anything heavy, and don't do any hard exercise until your doctor says it's okay.

Do try to walk each day.

Start by walking a little more than you did the day before.

Bit by bit, increase the amount you walk.

You can shower and take baths as usual.

But do not soak the incision for the first 2 weeks, or until your doctor tells you it's okay.

It may seem like a lot to do and remember, but don't worry.

Because before you go home, you'll meet with the staff to go through your care plan.

The plan will include information about checkups, specialist care, any ongoing tests you may need, and who to call if there's a problem.

This is a great time to ask questions.

Your medicines may change too, so be sure you understand what they are and how to take them.

Your plan will also include having a healthy lifestyle—like eating healthy, being active, and not smoking.

This will give you the best chance for a longer, healthier life.

Call your doctor if you see signs of infection, such as increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness; or drainage from the area.

And call if you have problems such as bleeding.

Get emergency help if you have signs of a stroke.

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These signs can include a sudden, severe headache like you've never experienced before; sudden numbness, tingling, or weakness; or loss of movement in the face, arm, or legs.

Get emergency help right away if you pass out or have severe trouble breathing.

If you're a little nervous right now, that's okay.

You know yourself best, so call your doctor if you have any questions.

Recovery and healing take time.