

Vail Valley Ear, Nose & Throat Group, P.C.
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UPPP POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

The recovery period for a UPPP is generally 10 to 14 days. This procedure is often combined with a procedure to reduce the size of the base (back) of the tongue. The UPPP is definitely the more painful of these procedures, and you may feel little or no discomfort in the tongue region. The day of surgery is usually not too bad, but by the 1st or 2nd day after surgery, the worst of the pain will usually set in. I therefore recommend beginning the pain medicine early and taking it about every 4 to 6 hours for the first couple of days after the surgery. It is better to stay ahead of the pain, rather than fall behind and have to catch up. I do not recommend waking yourself up to take the pain medicine, but you may take it at night if you wake up and the pain is again severe. Please call the office during office hours if a refill on the pain medicine is needed. You may also have been given a prescription for antibiotics and steroids. Follow the directions on the bottles. The antibiotics are to help keep the surgical site clean, and the steroids are to reduce pain and inflammation. If any of these medications upset the stomach or if the patient is vomiting, it is best to hold off on these temporarily or altogether if necessary. Numbing preparations such as Chloraseptic Spray or Lidocaine lollipops can be used to take the edge off the pain, especially at meal time.

I recommend liquids and soft foods for about 2 weeks after surgery. Avoid acidic liquids such as orange or tomato juice, and avoid foods that scratch on the way down such as chips or toast. Ice cream and other milk products will thicken the saliva, so yogurt and sherbets are better. It is very important to maintain adequate hydration, so you should therefore be sure to drink plenty of fluids, even though it hurts to swallow.

Bleeding from the back of the throat is the main concern postoperatively. It is rare and occurs in about 5% of patients, but it can be severe. Bleeding is most common within the first 48 hours after surgery or in 7 to 9 days when the scab falls off. When the patient spits or sneezes, it is normal for there to be small amounts of old blood in the mucous or saliva. When true bleeding occurs, the patient will either throw up a large amount of old blood (this looks like either dark red blood or coffee grounds) or you will see bright red blood dripping from the nose or mouth. If this occurs, immediately have the patient suck on an ice cube, as the cold may constrict the blood vessel and stop the bleeding. If the bleeding is severe or persists for longer than 5 minutes, call the office immediately. Also, if you experience any difficulty breathing, you should call the office immediately. You should avoid any strenuous physical activity for a full 2 weeks.

I should see the patient about 1 week after surgery. Please call for an appointment, if one has not already been made. Also, do not hesitate to call for any questions or concerns after surgery.