

# What To Expect: Carotid Endarterectomy

## *East Texas Vascular Associates*

### Your Surgical Incisions & Wound Dressings

1. The surgeons use sutures under the skin that will dissolve and a topical, medical grade superglue (Dermabond®) to keep the wound clean and dry. Dermabond® is the surgical dressing, you do not need to keep the wound covered.
2. You may experience a hard, excess tissue sensation under the surgical site, this is called a *healing ridge*. This is part of the body's normal healing process and will reduce as time passes.
3. You may experience numbness and tingling around the incision site. The surgeon cut cutaneous (skin) nerves to reach your carotid artery. Don't worry, for most patients, this is a temporary sensation that resolves 6-12 months after the operation.

### Discomfort & Pain

1. Pain is typically located over the surgical incision and can radiate up to the ear and down the neck.

2. You may experience headaches after your surgery secondary to increased blood flow. If you still have a headache that is not relieved with pain medicine, this is a WARNING symptom that should prompt you to call our office/911.

#### Managing Pain and Discomfort:

- Please apply ice to the surgical incisions 30 minutes on / 30 minutes off while awake for the first 24-36 hours to help reduce pain and swelling
- Prescription: Please take your prescriptions as written (Typically Tylenol 3 or Ultram)
- OTC medications: Patients may also try alternating Tylenol (max 3g/day) and Ibuprofen every 4-6 hours instead of taking prescribed pain medications

### Returning to Daily Activities

**Bathing:** You may shower after the surgery. Avoid submerging in water (Ex: taking a bath, swimming, or going in the hot tub) for 1-2 weeks.

**Work:** You can expect to tire more easily during the first week or two and continued fatigue is common for up to six weeks after surgery. Pay attention to how you feel, and ease back into your normal routine. If you need to work a shorter day, do it. You won't be productive at work if you're over-tired anyway.

**Driving:** Permitted once pain medicine is stopped and you can easily turn your head to check your surroundings on the road and safely merge with traffic!

**Exercise:** You may begin walking after the surgery as you feel up to it! Please wait 6 weeks to begin back vigorous activities such as running or lifting items heavier than 10lbs.

### *Stroke Warning Symptoms* CALL 911

- Sudden, severe headaches with no apparent cause (not relieved by pain medication)
- Sudden, blurred or double vision or loss of vision
- New onset weakness, numbness or tingling of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body
- Slurred speech, loss of speech or difficulty understanding speech
- Unexplained dizziness, unsteadiness or sudden falling

*Please don't hesitate to call the office with questions or concerns!*

CALL 903-595-2636

If you experience any of the following symptoms, please call our office for further instructions!

- Fever (>100.4°F) or chills
- Uncontrollable nausea/vomiting
- Excessive sweating
- Difficulty urinating
- Redness of the incision site or the groin
- Bleeding from the incision site or with urination
- Uncontrollable pain and/or worsening pain

**Disclaimer:** East Texas Vascular Associates, P.A. offers and maintains this handout to provide general information about carotid artery procedures. The information is provided with the understanding that East Texas Vascular Associates is not engaged in rendering surgical or medical advice or recommendations through this handout. Any information on this handout should not be considered a substitute for consultation with a board-certified surgeon. Individual facts and circumstances will determine the treatment that is most appropriate.