Acoustic Neuroma

An acoustic neuroma is an abnormal growth (*tumor*) of the nerve that connects the ear to the brain. This is the acoustic nerve.

SYMPTOMS

It usually occurs on just one side and produces symptoms of:

- Hearing loss.
- Ringing in the ear on the affected side.
- Dizziness and loss of balance.

DIAGNOSIS

It is usually diagnosed with an MRI. This is a special type of x-ray.

TREATMENT

- Surgery by a specialist in operating on the nervous system (*neurosurgeon*) can often remove the tumor while saving the function of the nerve. That means that often the hearing can be preserved. However, hearing may need to be sacrificed to obtain a cure.
- The neurosurgeon will use an operating microscope.
- The tumors can also be treated with radiation using the gamma knife. This is not a knife, but a machine that delivers a high dose of focused radiation. Little of the surrounding tissue is affected by the radiation because most of the radiation is directed with precision to the tumor.

Because of the location of this tumor, there are complications that can come from this surgery. Some of these problems are:

- Hearing loss.
- The muscles on that side of your face may be weakened or not work at all (*transient* or *permanent facial paralysis*).
- Leaking of the fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord (*cerebrospinal fluid*).
- An inflammation caused by infection of the membranes surrounding your brain (*meningitis*).
- Bleeding.
- Stroke.

Your surgeon will discuss why the surgery is necessary and also discuss the possible complications. The surgery is performed because the good results hoped for outweigh possible problems. All surgeries carry a small risk.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies.
- Medications taken.
- Previous surgery.
- Possibility of pregnancy.
- Use of any steroids, including oral, skin creams, or drops.

AFTER SURGERY

A bandage *(dressing*), depending on the location of the cut from surgery (*laceration*), may have been applied. This may be changed once per day or as instructed. If the dressing sticks, it may be soaked off with soapy water or hydrogen peroxide. Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- You have an oral temperature above 100.5° F (38.1° C).

- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- A breaking open of the wound (the edges do not stay together) after sutures have been removed.

Document Released: 09/27/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.