Cricopharyngeal Myotomy

Information for patients and families

Read this booklet to learn:

• What cricopharyngeal myotomy is
• How to prepare
• What to expect after surgery
• What instructions to follow at home
• Who to call if you have any questions
What is cricopharyngeal myotomy?

Cricopharyngeal myotomy is a minor surgery. This surgery helps people who have trouble swallowing because a muscle in their throat spasms. These spasms are caused by different things, but sometimes the cause is unknown.

During this surgery, your doctor makes an incision (cut) 10 to 12 centimeters (about 3 inches) in your neck and a small cut in your upper esophageal (throat) muscle to help you swallow better. The surgery usually takes 1 hour. You are in the hospital for 1 to 2 days.

How do I prepare?

• Don’t eat anything after midnight the night before your surgery.

• You may drink clear fluids up to 5 hours before your surgery.

• If you take any medicines, ask your surgeon if you should take them before your surgery, especially blood thinning medicines such as Heparin, Pradax, Aspirin or Warfarin (also called Coumadin).

What can I expect after surgery?

1. When you wake up, we take you to the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU).

2. In the PACU, your nurse closely checks your temperature, blood pressure, pulse and breathing.

3. After about 1 hour, we take you to the in-patient unit. You stay here until you are ready to go home.
What about my incisions?

• You may have a small drain coming from your neck incision. We usually remove this the day after your surgery.

• We use dissolvable stitches to close your incision, so they don’t need to be removed.

• We put a dry dressing over your incision. Your doctor or nurse removes it the day after your surgery. You can leave your incision uncovered as long as your clothes don’t rub against it.

What should I do when I get home?

You can take a shower once you get home. Let the water run over your incision, then pat it dry with a towel. **Don’t rub it dry.**

⚠️ **Call your surgeon if you have:**

• a temperature higher than 38.5 °C or 101.3 °F

• chills

• trouble breathing

• any redness, pus (yellowish liquid) or a bad smell coming from your incision

• any increase in pain (even after taking your pain medication)

You will have some swelling at your incision site. This is normal as your body heals. Your swelling will slowly go down over a couple of weeks.
Who can I call if I have any questions?

Call your surgeon’s office if you have any questions.

**Thoracic surgical team:**

Dr. M. Cypel  
416 340 5156

Dr. Elliot Wakeam  
416 340 4800 ext. 3121

Dr. L. Donahoe  
416 340 4800 ext. 6529

Dr. M. DePerrot  
416 340 5549

Dr. S. Keshavjee  
416 340 4010

Dr. A. Pierre  
416 340 5354

Dr. T. Waddell  
416 340 3432

Dr. K. Yasufuku  
416 340 4290

Dr. J. Yeung  
416 340 4800 ext. 6529

Have feedback about this document?  
Please fill out our survey. Use this link: surveymonkey.com/r/uhn-pe

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information. Contact pfep@uhn.ca to request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats.

© 2022 University Health Network. All rights reserved. Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.