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After ear canal surgery (canaloplasty)

Home instructions — keep this sheet where you can find it

Keep the ear completely dry

- For showering and hair washing: cotton wool smeared on the outside with Vaseline, placed just inside the ear — not deep. A shower cap over the top helps.
- No swimming, sea, baths or hot tubs until I confirm the canal has healed.
- Nothing into the ear — no water, oil, peroxide, cotton buds or drops unless prescribed.
- If water does get in, tilt the head to drain it and phone if the ear then becomes more painful.

First two weeks

DO

- Change the outer cotton wool daily, or whenever soiled
- Sleep on your back or the other side for a week
- Keep the stitch line clean and dry
- Take painkillers 45 minutes before your pack-removal appointment

DON'T

- Do not touch, push at or remove the ear pack — it comes out at about day 7
- No cotton buds, ever
- No swimming for at least 4 weeks, and only once cleared
- No gym for 2 weeks, no contact sport for 6 weeks
- No smoking
- No aspirin (Disprin, Grandpa, Ecotrin)

Pain relief

Paracetamol	1 g every 6 hours (max 4 g a day) for 3–4 days. Take it by the clock.
Ibuprofen	400 mg every 8 hours with food for 3–5 days, together with the paracetamol. Skip it if you have an ulcer, kidney problems, or asthma set off by anti-inflammatories.
Antibiotics	Not routine. Only if specifically prescribed.
Ear drops	Usually started once the pack is out. Use exactly as prescribed, for exactly as long.

What to expect

Week 1	Muffled hearing, and discharge going red → yellow → brown with an antiseptic smell. A dull ache, worse when chewing.
About day 7	The pack is removed in the rooms. Hearing improves at once, though not yet to its final level.
Weeks 2–6	Crusting and occasional discharge continue while the canal skin heals. One or two more cleaning visits.
6 weeks	Most canals are healed. Hearing and canal size are reassessed.
Long term	If this was for surfer's ear: earplugs every time you go in the water, plus a hood in the cold. This is what stops it coming back.

Phone us

- Any weakness of the face, drooping mouth, or difficulty closing the eye — phone immediately or go to the nearest emergency unit
- Sudden hearing loss, severe spinning dizziness, or discharge from the ear canal
- Pain increasing rather than settling after day 3, with redness or swelling
- Redness and swelling spreading behind the ear, or fever over 38 °C
- The pack falls out in the first few days — do not push it back in

If anything worries you, phone. It is always better to ask than to wait.

Rooms 021 975 0840/1 — redirected to Dr Vermaak after hours.