

Head and Neck Surgery Pathway

	Day of Surgery	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8 and 9	Day 10 – Discharge and Goals Met
Fluid and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing to eat or drink Intravenous (IV) started Bladder catheter inserted Nasogastric (NG) tube (placed through your nose and into your stomach) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tube feeding started 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tube feeding rate increased Catheter taken out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowel routine started 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IV stopped Tube feeds changed to regular meal times 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May start sips of water You/your family learn how to do tube feedings OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gastrostomy (G) tube is inserted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you have a G-tube, you/your family will learn how to do tube feedings Start oral fluids if ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerating full fluid diet OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeding yourself through your NG or G-tube Swallow study (FEES) booked for 10 to 14 days after surgery
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bedrest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit at the edge of the bed or chair Walking as tolerated Physiotherapy started 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk more often and further every day 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physiotherapy to start head and neck exercises 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking and moving around on own See booklet <i>Having Surgery for Cancer of the Head or Neck</i> for exercises Prescription for physio given
Tracheotomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracheotomy (trach) inserted during surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respiratory therapists assess trach. Follow you during your stay. Deep breathing and coughing exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trach care every 4 hours and as needed 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trach tube changed to non-cuffed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corking started. You'll still be able to breath through your mouth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trach tube taken out if you're ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You/your family learn how to do trach care if you're going home with a trach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trach taken out OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You/your family know how to care for your trach Home respiratory care as needed
Medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain medicine through IV Blood thinners started Antibiotic started 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antibiotics finished Medicine you take at home started 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pain medicine given through NG tube 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking pain medicine by mouth, NG, or G-tube Given prescriptions
Surgical Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap checked every hour Suture line care started 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap checked every 2 hours 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap checked every 4 hours 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap no longer checked Stitches taken out of lip and chin 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stitches taken out neck 	
2 Surgical Donor Sites: Skin graft and Flap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covered with dressings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outer dressing of skin graft donor site taken off 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dressing taken off flap donor site Splint made for donor site as needed Staples taken out both sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap donor site dressing changed Staples taken out of both sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap donor site dressing changed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flap donor site dressing changed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can care for your donor site as needed OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Care arranged as needed
Surgical Drains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drain output monitored 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drains taken out 				
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloodwork Vital signs every hour Mouth care 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital signs every 2 hours 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital signs every 4 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloodwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vital signs every 8 hours 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloodwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given your follow-up appointments with your surgeon and the Tom Baker Cancer Centre (TBCC)