



## Head and Neck Surgery Pathway: Reconstruction Inside Your Mouth

### No Radiation Before Surgery

These are goals for your recovery. **Your recovery may not follow this pathway exactly.** Your care team will tell you what to expect.

	Before surgery	
What tests, procedures, and medical devices should I expect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presurgical testing appointment:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bring a list of all the medications you take.</li> <li>- Bring results from medical tests done outside of MSK.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your nurse practitioner may order more tests, appointments, or both.</li> </ul>
What medications will I take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your doctor when to stop taking blood thinners. Examples include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aspirin</li> <li>- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)</li> <li>- Herbal supplements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow your care team’s instructions for taking other medications.</li> </ul>
Which team members will I see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head and Neck surgeon</li> <li>• Plastic surgeon</li> <li>• Speech and Swallow therapist</li> <li>• Registered dietitian-nutritionist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dentist</li> <li>• Social worker, case manager, or both</li> <li>• Tobacco Cessation nurse, if you smoke or recently quit</li> </ul>
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the instructions in your surgical guide.</li> <li>• Stop smoking.</li> <li>• Tell your care team if you drink alcohol.</li> <li>• Plan your ride home after surgery.</li> <li>• Sign up for MyMSK, your MSK patient portal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The day before surgery:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wash with Hibiclens® if your surgical team tells you to.</li> <li>- Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your surgery.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Day of surgery	
What tests, procedures, and medical devices should I expect?	<p><b>Placed before surgery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intravenous (IV) line in a vein</li> <li>• Compression boots on your legs</li> </ul> <p><b>Placed during surgery:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urinary (Foley) catheter in your urethra</li> <li>• If needed, vacuum dressing over your donor site</li> <li>• Bandage over your skin graft, if you have one</li> <li>• Tracheostomy tube and humidifier</li> <li>• Feeding tube in your nose</li> <li>• Tubes and drains in your incision</li> <li>• Arm splint or ankle stabilizing (CAM) boot, if needed</li> </ul> <p>You'll have all of these devices when you wake up after surgery.</p>
What medications will I take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before surgery, take only the medications your surgical team told you to take. Take them with a small sip of water.</li> <li>• After surgery, you will get pain medication, medication to prevent nausea, and antibiotics.</li> </ul>
Which team members will I see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before surgery, your Head and Neck surgery team and Plastic surgery team will mark your surgical site.</li> </ul>
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your surgery.</li> <li>• Between midnight and 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, you can drink a total of 12 ounces of water.</li> <li>• Starting 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, do not drink anything. This includes water.</li> <li>• After surgery, use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour you're awake. You will get an adaptor that connects to your tracheostomy tube.</li> </ul>

While you're in the hospital:

- Your Head and Neck surgery and Plastic surgery teams will visit your room every day.
- If you have a skin graft, your nurse will change the bandage every day.

- You will wear compression boots while you're in bed.
- Tell your nurse if your pain isn't controlled.

	1 day after surgery	2 days after surgery
What tests, procedures, and medical devices should I expect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your urinary catheter will be removed when you move to your hospital room.</li> <li>You will get nutrition through your feeding tube, unless you feel very nauseous.</li> <li>Your nurse will check your free flap for a Doppler signal every hour. This is to make sure blood is flowing.</li> <li>Your nurse will suction your tracheostomy tube often. This keeps your airway clear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will get nutrition through your feeding tube.</li> <li>Your nurse will check your free flap for a Doppler signal every hour.</li> <li>Your nurse will suction your tracheostomy tube often.</li> </ul>
What medications will I take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU), you will get pain medication through your IV. You will control the medication with a button (PCA).</li> <li>When you move to your hospital room, you will start getting liquid pain medication through your feeding tube instead.</li> <li>Antibiotics</li> <li>Daily medications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pain medication through your feeding tube (as needed)</li> <li>Antibiotics</li> <li>Daily medications</li> </ul>
Which team members will I see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered dietitian-nutritionist</li> <li>Physical therapist or occupational therapist, if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical therapist or occupational therapist, if needed</li> </ul>
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You won't be able to speak for a few days after surgery. You will communicate with the staff and your visitors by writing on a communication board and using an iPad speaking app, if available. Your nurse will bring you these things.</li> <li>Use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour you're awake.</li> <li>Sit in your chair for most of the day.</li> <li>Walk at least 2 to 3 laps around the nursing unit. A staff member will help you.</li> </ul>

	<p>you're awake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sit in your chair for most of the day. A staff member will help you move.</li><li>• Walk at least 1 lap around the nursing unit. A staff member will help you.</li></ul>	
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	3 days after surgery	4 days after surgery
What tests, procedures, and medical devices should I expect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You will get nutrition through your feeding tube.</li> <li>Your nurse will check your free flap for a Doppler signal every 2 hours.</li> <li>Your nurse will suction your tracheostomy tube often.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A member of your Head and Neck surgery team will change your tracheostomy tube.</li> <li>You will get nutrition through your feeding tube.</li> <li>Your nurse will check your free flap for a Doppler signal every 2 hours.</li> </ul>
What medications will I take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chlorhexidine (Peridex®) mouthwash (4 times)</li> <li>Pain medication through your feeding tube (as needed)</li> <li>Antibiotics</li> <li>Daily medications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chlorhexidine mouthwash (4 times)</li> <li>Pain medication through your feeding tube (as needed)</li> <li>Daily medications</li> </ul>
Which team members will I see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical therapist or occupational therapist, if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech and Swallow therapist</li> <li>Case manager</li> <li>Physical therapist or occupational therapist, if needed</li> </ul>
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean your mouth with a baking soda and water mixture (4 times). Your nurse will show you how.</li> <li>Use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour you're awake.</li> <li>Sit in your chair for most of the day.</li> <li>Walk at least 3 to 4 laps around the nursing unit. A staff member will help you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do speech and swallow exercises. Your speech and swallow therapist will show you how. You may start speaking today.</li> <li>Start capping your tracheostomy tube, if you can.</li> <li>Start planning your home care with your case manager. They will talk with you about your caregiver, medical supplies, and other changes you may need to make at home.</li> <li>Clean your mouth with baking soda and water (4 times).</li> <li>Use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour you're awake.</li> </ul>

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sit in your chair for most of the day.</li><li>• Walk at least 4 laps around the nursing unit. A staff member will help you.</li></ul> |
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	5 Days After Surgery	6 Days After Surgery
What tests, procedures, and medical devices should I expect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member of your Plastic surgery team will remove your vacuum dressing. Your donor site will be covered with a Vaseline® gauze dressing.</li> <li>• You will get some nutrition through your feeding tube.</li> <li>• Your nurse will check your free flap for a Doppler signal every 4 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member of your Head and Neck surgery team will remove your tracheostomy tube.</li> <li>• Your feeding tube may be removed if you can get enough nutrition from drinking and eating.</li> <li>• Your nurse will change your donor site dressing.</li> <li>• Your nurse will check your free flap for a Doppler signal every 4 hours.</li> </ul>
What medications will I take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chlorhexidine mouthwash (4 times)</li> <li>• Oral pain medication, if you can swallow</li> <li>• Pain medication through your feeding tube (as needed)</li> <li>• Daily medications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chlorhexidine mouthwash (4 times)</li> <li>• Oral pain medication (as needed)</li> <li>• Daily medications</li> </ul>
Which team members will I see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and Swallow therapist</li> <li>• Dietitian</li> <li>• Physical therapist or occupational therapist, if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case manager</li> <li>• Physical therapist or occupational therapist, if needed</li> </ul>
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may start drinking liquids. Your speech and swallow therapist will help you.</li> <li>• Keep your tracheostomy tube capped.</li> <li>• Learn how to care for your drain(s) and dressing(s). Your nurse will teach you.</li> <li>• Clean your mouth with baking soda and water (4 times).</li> <li>• Use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour you're awake.</li> <li>• Sit in your chair for most of the day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish planning your discharge with your caregiver and case manager.</li> <li>• Make sure you have a ride home after discharge.</li> <li>• Review how to care for your drain(s) and dressing(s).</li> <li>• Clean your mouth with baking soda and water (4 times).</li> <li>• Use your incentive spirometer 10 times every hour while awake</li> <li>• Sit in your chair for most of the day.</li> <li>• Walk at least 4 laps around the nursing unit. A staff</li> </ul>



- Walk at least 4 laps around the nursing unit. A staff member will help you.

member will help you.

	7 Days After Surgery (Day of Discharge)	After Discharge
What tests, procedures, and medical devices should I expect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A staff member will review your discharge instructions with you.</li> <li>• Your nurse or case manager will give you supplies to take home. Other supplies will be delivered to your home.</li> <li>• Your nurse will change your donor site dressing.</li> <li>• You may leave the hospital with tubes and drains in your incision.</li> <li>• You will leave the hospital with your arm splint or CAM boot, if you're wearing one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tubes and drains in your incision may be removed at your follow-up appointment.</li> <li>• You, your caregiver, and your visiting nurse will change your dressings every day.</li> <li>• If you have an arm splint or CAM boot, your doctor will tell you when it will be removed.</li> </ul>
What medications will I take?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chlorhexidine mouthwash (4 times)</li> <li>• Oral pain medication (as needed)</li> <li>• Daily medications</li> <li>• Your doctor will give you prescriptions for medications to take at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chlorhexidine mouthwash (4 times a day)</li> <li>• Oral pain medication (as needed)</li> <li>• Stool softeners (as needed)</li> <li>• Other prescription medications, if needed</li> <li>• Daily medications</li> </ul>
Which team members will I see?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discharge pharmacist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will have a follow-up appointment with your Head and Neck surgery and Plastic surgery teams 1 week after discharge.</li> <li>• You will have a follow-up appointment with your Speech and Swallow therapist, if needed.</li> </ul>
What should I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan to leave the hospital by 11:00 am.</li> <li>• Gather your belongings in the morning.</li> <li>• Review how to care for your drain(s) and dressing(s).</li> <li>• Clean your mouth with baking soda and water (4 times).</li> <li>• Use your incentive spirometer 10 times each hour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the instructions in your surgical guide.</li> <li>• Call your surgeon's office if you have any questions or concerns.</li> <li>• Don't drive until your surgeon says it's safe, especially if you're taking pain medication.</li> </ul>

	<p>you're awake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spend most of your day out of bed.</li><li>• Walk as often as you can.</li></ul>	
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# Activity and Recovery Log

Use this log to track your recovery after your surgery.

	1 Day After Surgery	2 Days After Surgery	3 Days After Surgery	4 Days After Surgery
<b>Moving &amp; Walking</b> Check 1 box each time you walk 1 lap around the nursing unit.	Goal: Move from your bed to your chair 3 times <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal: Walk 1 lap or more <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Goal: Walk 2 to 3 laps or more <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Goal: Walk 3 to 4 laps or more <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Goal: Walk 4 laps or more <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Incentive Spirometer</b> Check 1 box for each hour you use your incentive spirometer 10 times.	Goal: 10 times each hour <input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM	Goal: 10 times each hour <input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM	Goal: 10 times each hour <input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM	Goal: 10 times each hour <input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM <input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM
<b>Oral Cleanings</b> Check 1 box each time you clean your mouth with baking soda and water.	X	X	Goal: 4 times <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Goal: 4 times <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

5 Days After Surgery

6 Days After Surgery

7 Days After Surgery

<p><b>Walking</b></p> <p>Check 1 box each time you walk 1 lap around the nursing unit.</p>	<p>Goal: Walk 4 laps or more</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Goal: Walk 4 laps or more</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Goal: Walk 4 laps or more</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Incentive Spirometer</b></p> <p>Check 1 box for each hour you use your incentive spirometer 10 times.</p>	<p>Goal: 10 times each hour</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM</p>	<p>Goal: 10 times each hour</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM</p>	<p>Goal: 10 times each hour</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 8 AM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 10 AM    <input type="checkbox"/> 11 AM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 1 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 2 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 4 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 5 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 7 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 8 PM</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 PM    <input type="checkbox"/> 10 PM</p>
<p><b>Oral Cleanings</b></p> <p>Check 1 box each time you clean your mouth with baking soda and water.</p>	<p>Goal: 4 times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Goal: 4 times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Goal: 4 times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>