

**NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY ASSOCIATES, P.C.**  
**Brookwood Medical Plaza**  
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**(205)949-1800**

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## **GAMMA KNIFE**

### **LESIONS OF THE HEAD AND BRAIN:**

You have been diagnosed with a condition requiring intervention. Your doctor has explained to you your specific diagnosis, possible causes and treatment options.

### **WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE?**

The gamma knife procedure is a non-surgical treatment for certain brain lesions. The procedure will begin with the placement of an aluminum head frame, which is held in place by 4 screw-like pins in the very outer layer of the skull. A local anesthetic will be administered to each pin-site (two in the front and two in the back). You will probably feel some discomfort for a period of time. After placement of the head frame, you will be taken to the MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) suite, where an MRI will be obtained to help the physicians in localizing and planning your gamma knife treatment. Upon return to the gamma knife suite, you will be placed in a "holding area" while the physicians are studying your films and mapping out the treatment plan. This may take several hours. During this time a family member will be allowed to sit with you. After the treatment planning is complete, you will be moved into the gamma knife area where you will be placed on the table or "couch". A large silver helmet will be attached to the table, and your head-frame will be attached to this. Once all the coordinates are set, a microphone will be attached to your hospital gown, and the gamma knife team will leave the room. Monitors are set up for the physicians to watch you during the procedure, and the microphone will allow you to communicate with them. When the procedure begins, the couch will slide back into the dome part of the gamma knife table, and the actual radiation treatment will begin. Each treatment may last from one minute to thirty minutes, and you could have up to sixteen treatments. If more than one treatment is required, the physicians will come into the room between treatments and re-adjust the helmet for the next set of coordinates. After the last treatment, you will be removed from the gamma couch, returned to the treatment room where the head frame will be removed. You will then be allowed to change back into your own clothing, and will be given discharge instructions and released.

### **WHAT TO BRING TO THE HOSPITAL:**

Please bring your driver's license and insurance information with you to the registration office. Upon admission, you will be given a hospital gown to change into. You may bring stretch pants and socks and/or slippers to wear during the procedure (nothing with metal). If you have long hair, please put it in a pony-tail. Do not wear or bring

jewelry with you. Do not wear make-up. Do not wear dark finger nail polish. You will be asked to remove dentures and contact lenses before the procedure. **Upon discharge, someone must be with you to drive you home.**

### **PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:**

Your admission will be registered with the hospital by our office. We will contact your insurance company for pre-certification requirements. **You will be responsible for inquiring whether a second surgical opinion is required by your insurance.** The evening before your surgery, **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT.** This includes gum, mints and your morning coffee. If you are taking any medications, please contact the office regarding whether or not you should take them the morning of your procedure. **Lab work, if necessary, will be drawn the morning of admission after you register.**

### **MEDICATION:**

It is normal to experience some pain and headache after the procedure. This will gradually subside over time, but during the first week after your treatment you may need to take Extra-Strength Tylenol. If you have questions concerning your medications, Kristi at (205) 949-1810 in the office between 8:00a.m. and 4:00p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.

### **DRESSING CARE:**

The pin-hole sites will be covered with a band-aid after frame removal. These can be cleaned daily with a little soap and water, and will heal within a couple of days.

### **POST PROCEDURE VISITS FOR ALL CONDITIONS EXCEPT TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA:**

Upon discharge you will be given a post gamma knife instruction sheet. All medications and follow-up care will be prescribed by your primary care physician, neurologist or oncologist. Please call their office for an appointment one month after your treatment. Our office will schedule any required follow-up MRI scans. The scans will be compared to the MRI made on the day of gamma knife procedure. Our office will contact you with the results and Dr. Swaid's recommendations. It will not be necessary for you to see Dr. Swaid for follow-up care.

### **POST PROCEDURE VISITS FOR TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA:**

Upon discharge you will be given a post gamma knife instruction sheet. You should see your primary care physician or neurologist for any follow-up and medications. Our office will contact you at regular intervals to check on the status of the facial pain. It will not be necessary for you to see Dr. Swaid for follow-up care but feel free to contact our office with updates on your progress.

### **RETURN TO DAILY ACTIVITIES:**

The day following your procedure you should be able to return to your normal daily activity.

**THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE USED AS A GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE USED IN LIEU OF MEDICAL TREATMENT. AS INDIVIDUAL CONDITIONS VARY, ALWAYS CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR REGARDING YOUR HEALTH CARE.**