

CERVICAL SPINAL SURGERY WOUND CARE AND DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Surgical Wound Care

1. After 72 hours, please remove the dressing(s). You may shower and then replace the dressing with clean gauze for one week. After that week, remove the dressing and leave it open to air.
2. If you have Steri-Strips on your incision, they will begin to curl in 7 to 14 days. The curls may be trimmed. Please do not pull on the Steri-Strips but allow them to fall off on their own.
3. If you have sutures or staples, they must come out in 10 to 14 days. Please call the office for an appointment.
4. Do not get the wound wet for 72 hours after surgery.
5. Do not submerge the incision site(s) underwater for 1 month after surgery.
6. Do not vigorously scrub incision site after removal of the surgical dressing. Use a mild soap to shower (example: Dial or Ivory)

Medication Management

1. You will receive a prescription for medication at discharge from the hospital.
2. Medications will be refilled during normal office hours only. Monday through Friday from 9 am to 3 pm – no exceptions. There are no refills on weekends or after hours. Please call your pharmacy and have them fax us a refill request.
3. Three to four days after surgery begin supplementing Extra Strength Tylenol between your narcotic doses to decrease your use of narcotics until you no longer need the narcotics. Maximum intake of Tylenol per day is not to exceed 4000 mg. The narcotics that you are prescribed will contain some Tylenol (Acetaminophen content).
4. Increase your fluid intake to avoid constipation from the narcotic medication use for pain.

Activities

1. No lifting greater than 5 pounds.
2. No strenuous activities.
3. Begin a daily walking program that gradually increases.
4. No driving for two weeks after surgery. If you are given a collar, limit driving as much as possible until your collar is discontinued by the physician.

Miscellaneous

1. Unless otherwise indicated, wear cervical collars at all times if you are prescribed a cervical collar.
2. If you are required to wear a cervical collar for showering, you will be given a second collar.
3. Before every office appointment, you will need a cervical x-ray unless otherwise instructed. Please allow approximately 2 hours before your appointment for this procedure. The x-ray will be performed at the hospital. (Remember to bring your insurance card with you to the hospital).
4. Bring the x-ray to office appointment with you.
5. Your follow-up appointment should be in four weeks after your surgery date. Call the office for an appointment upon discharge from the hospital.

When to call the doctor

1. Fever greater than 101.5 orally.
2. Redness, swelling or drainage at the wound site(s).
3. Weakness, numbness or change in neurological status.
4. Increased pain not relieved with medication.