

LUMBAR 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 a clean gauze for one week. After the first week, remove the dressing and leave it open to air unless clothes irritate it. If that is the case, you may keep the dressing on it.
2. If you have Steri-Strips, they will begin to curl in 7 to 14 days. The curls may be trimmed. Please do not pull on the Steri-Strips and 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 prescriptions 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 prolonged bending, stooping, squatting, pushing or pulling.
2. No lifting greater than 5 pounds.
3. No strenuous activities.
4. Begin a daily walking program that gradually increases.
5. No driving for 2 weeks after surgery. If given a brace limit driving as much as possible until the back brace is discontinued by the physician.
6. No sitting at a 90 degree angle for more than five minutes for the first four weeks after surgery. Reclining is permitted.

Miscellaneous

1. After two weeks, you may desire to return to work. Please notify the office and we will make arrangements for a letter to allow you to return to work. We suggest beginning with two to four hour days until you can progress to longer levels. Each case is different so speaking to your doctor prior to discharge is a good idea.
2. Your follow-up appointment should be four weeks after your surgery date unless otherwise specified. Please 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.