

# DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

## Anterior Cervical Surgery

### YOUR COLLAR

- You may be given a cervical collar to wear postoperatively. You must wear the collar at all times until seen in the office for your first post-operative visit. You can take it off for showering but must place it back after.



### SHOWERING and the gauze dressing

- As long as the incision is not leaking or draining fluid, you may shower starting five days after your surgery. After showering, gently dry the incision site. You should change the gauze dressing over your incision every day and keep the incision covered with dry sterile gauze and tape. As long as the incision site is not leaking or draining fluid, you may stop covering the incision with gauze five days after surgery. Do not rub cream or lotion on the incision until seen in the office.



### EXERCISE

- You have unlimited walking and stair climbing privileges. Walking outside (in nice weather only) or walking on a treadmill (no incline) is also allowed.
- Do NOT lift anything weighing greater than 10-15lbs. Especially try to avoid lifting or reaching above your head.



### INCISION

- Please make sure your incisions are checked at least twice daily for signs and symptoms of infection: If any of the below should occur, please call the office.
  - ✓ Drainage from incisional site
  - ✓ Opening of incisions
  - ✓ Fevers greater than 101
  - ✓ Flu-like symptoms
  - ✓ Increased redness and/or tenderness
- If you have **sutures** (not tape) in your incision they may be removed 2 weeks following your surgery. This may be done by a visiting nurse, family physician or by making an appointment to come into the office. Please leave steri-strips (butterfly tapes) in place. They will fall off on their own.



### SLEEPING

- You may sleep in any position which makes you comfortable as long as your collar is securely in place. Many patients find comfort sleeping in a recliner chair. It is normal to have difficulty sleeping for the first several weeks following your surgery. We recommend trying Benadryl (over the counter drug at the drugstore).



### EATING

- It is normal to have a sore throat and difficulty swallowing solid foods for a few weeks. This may persist for several weeks. Eating soft foods like yogurt, macaroni and mashed potatoes will help.



### PAIN

- Do NOT take any anti-inflammatory medication (Advil, Aleve, Motrin, Celebrex, Vioxx, etc.) for the first 12 weeks following your surgery. You may take your prescription pain medicine.
- To help alleviate persistent soreness around the bone graft site or between the shoulder blades, apply ice or warm moist compresses. It is normal for graft discomfort to persist for several weeks following your surgery. The best thing is to keep walking and strengthen the hip muscle.
- Do not resume taking Fosamax or Actonel for 12 weeks after your fusion surgery.
- Once the Percocet script runs out, you will be switched to hydrocodone.**



### DRIVING

- You may NOT drive a car until told otherwise by your physician. You may be a passenger for short distances (20-30 minutes). If you must take a longer trip, make sure to make several pit stops so that you can walk around and stretch your legs. Reclining the passenger seat seems to be the most comfortable position for most patients. It is illegal to drive a car while wearing a cervical collar.



### FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

Your 1<sup>st</sup> post-operative appointment is 2 weeks from surgery. This appointment is made when your surgery is scheduled.



### QUESTIONS or CONCERNS

If you have any additional questions/concerns call our clinical staff at **214-370-3535**