

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Lumbar Spine Fusion



INCISION and Wound Care

- 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 (spots of blood are expected for 1st 2 weeks)
 - ✓ Opening of incisions
 - ✓ Thermometer fevers greater than 101
 - ✓ Increased redness and/or tenderness around the incision
- If you have **black sutures** (stitches) over your incision these may be removed at 2-3 weeks following your surgery at an appointment in our office.
 - If sutures are not obviously seen, then likely absorbable Monocryl sutures were used. These do not need removal as they will be absorbed.
- Change the gauze dressing over your incision **every day**, keep the incision covered with dry gauze and tape for 14 days. Clean with soap and water- Do not rub cream or lotion on the incision.



SHOWERING

- You may shower **2 days after surgery**. You may remove your bandages 2-3 days after your surgery.
 - YES: Gentle water pressure, water can flow down over the incision, limit a direct stream onto wound.
 - YES: Soap; Yes hair washing.
 - NO: No swimming, no baths, no steam rooms, no hot tubs! #1 risk is falling!



BRACE

- You need to wear your brace when you're out of bed and/or active, not when resting at home.
- Always wear a T-shirt *under* your brace so that it isn't in contact with your bare skin.
 - The brace may cause you to sweat and you may feel warm; this could irritate and breakdown your incision if not protected.



EXERCISE

- Lift objects weighing less than 10-15 lbs
- Do not bend or twist at the waist. Always bend your knees!!
- Think about leg blood clots- Limit your sitting to 20-30 minute intervals to keep blood flow to the legs.
 - There are no recline limitations for sitting in a recliner chair.
- Walk as much as possible- let discomfort be your guide.
- You may also go up and down stairs as much as you can tolerate. You may walk outside, and you may walk on a treadmill. Avoid sweating into the incision.



PAIN

- Take pain medication as prescribed. As your pain level decreases, you may begin to take over-the-counter Extra Strength Tylenol.
 - "Miserable for 3 days, bad for 3 weeks, then will start to feel better"
 - Periodically there is a *worsening* of leg pain or opposite sided pain! This is attributed to surgical manipulation of previously compressed nerve roots during the decompression.
 - This is expected and resolves over several days!



DRIVING

- You may NOT drive a car until told otherwise by your physician (usually at your first office visit). 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.



FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS

- Your first post-operative appointment is made at the time surgery is scheduled.
- Please refer to folder given to you prior to surgery.



QUESTIONS or CONCERNS

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