

Spine post-operative instructions

When do I need to be seen in clinic?

- Your 1st postoperative appointment should occur at 10-14 days after surgery.
- If you have been in a rehabilitation unit, you should be seen in clinic 10-14 days from the date of your discharge.
- **Please schedule your appointment by calling our office at 720.441.4021.**

What activities are restricted after surgery?

- No Excessive bending, twisting at the waist, or lifting greater than 10 pounds for 6-8 weeks if you have had a lumbar / lower back surgery.
- Do not lift more than a gallon of milk for the first 2 weeks if you have had cervical / neck surgery
- Do not lift arms above your head for the first few weeks other than to comb or wash your hair if you have had cervical / neck surgery.
- No driving while you are taking narcotic pain medications or muscle relaxants.
- No impact exercises for 6 weeks during the post-operative period. This includes running, jogging, aerobics, golfing, etc.
- No smoking as this increases the chance that the bone will not heal properly and could cause the fusion to fail.
- Limit sitting to no more than 20-30 minutes at a time.

What symptoms are normal after surgery?

- You may experience some pain around your incision site as well as general stiffness.
- You may notice muscle spasms during the healing process.
- There may be some new or residual numbness and /or tingling. This may be the last symptom to resolve.

What symptoms should I be worried about after surgery?

- **Signs of infection**
 - Excessive redness or warmth at incision site

- Increase in pain or swelling of incision site
- Pink, yellow, green, or foul smelling drainage from incision site
- Fever greater than 100.5
- Unusual swelling or pain in one leg
- New or increased pain/numbness/weakness in your arms or legs
- Unusual abdominal swelling and or inability to have a bowel movement
- **If you experience any of these symptoms please call our office at 720-441-4021**

Pain management:

- Pain medications will be prescribed by our office following surgery. Take these medications only as directed.
- We expect your pain to decrease as your incision heals, and we will assist you weaning off these medications. This usually begins around one week postoperatively.
- It is expected that Tylenol or a similar over-the-counter medication should manage most of your pain.
- If you have difficulty controlling your headaches, please contact our office for discussion of other prescription medications or referral to a specialist.
- **Please monitor your refills closely and allow 3 days for refill requests to be processed. Absolutely NO medications refills will be processed on the weekend, so please plan accordingly and allow ample time for refills.**

How do I manage constipation after surgery?

- Constipation can increase if you are inactive and/or are using narcotic pain medications.
- Increase your fluid intake.
- Add fiber to your diet or through a fiber supplement such as colace, metamucil, or citrucel.
- You can use other over the counter medications such as Miralax or Senna tablets.
- Increase your physical activity and limit sitting as

mentioned above.

- Do not delay bowel movements.

Wound Care:

- There are typically either staples or dissolvable sutures in your incision. This will be evaluated at your first postoperative visit.
- You may shower on the 1st day after surgery. Allow water to run over incision and gently pat dry.
- **No** baths or hot tubs for 6 weeks after your surgery.
- Do **NOT** apply any creams, ointments, powders, or perfumes to your incision until you have been cleared to do so by our office.

Emotional Recovery: Surgery places stress on the body's reserves. By preparing ahead of time, you will feel more at ease with the entire surgery process.

- Feelings of tiredness and discouragement are normal as preoperative symptoms slowly subside.
- Prescription pain medications can alter sleep patterns, bowel movements, and emotional responses.
- A positive attitude and patience are needed for successful recovery from any surgery.
- You will find that each day you will feel a little better.
- Your recovery is unique, as you are a unique person.

Cold Therapy: Used to reduce pain, swelling, and/or inflammation.

- Ice, like heat, should only be applied for 15-20 minutes at a time and should only be applied once every two hours.
- It should never be applied directly to your skin but wrapped in a damp towel to prevent "ice burns."

What activities are permitted after surgery?

- Walk as your primary source of exercise / activity 2-3 times daily.
- Wear any collars or braces as directed if you were given one.
- Use your one growth stimulator as directed if you were given one.
- Listen to your body: If it hurts don't do it.

When can I restart my regular home medication?

- You can restart your home medications, such as blood pressure medications, cholesterol medications, diabetic medications, etc. as soon as you are home
- **DO NOT** restart non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDS) for 6 weeks after surgery as they could delay healing.
- Avoid aspirin for 6 weeks after surgery.
- If you take a blood thinner, restart this only under the direction of your prescribing physician.

Are there any other concerns I should be aware of?

- Use a cane to aid with stability and balance when using stairs or when walking on uneven surfaces, snow, ice, or any surface that is unsteady and could promote a fall.
- A fall or trauma has the potential of damaging the surgery that was performed.

Return to Work:

- This will be determined by our office on an individual basis during one of your postoperative appointments and will take into consideration your work duties and requirements.
- If you have short-term disability paperwork that needs to be processed by our office, please mail or fax it to us as soon as possible.
- Long-term disability paperwork will not be processed by our office.

Brain tumor post-operative instructions

When do I need to be seen in clinic?

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- If you have been in a rehabilitation unit, you should be seen in clinic 10-14 days from the date of your discharge.
- **Please schedule your appointment by calling our office at 720.441.4021.**

What activities are restricted after surgery?

- No Excessive bending, twisting at the waist, or lifting greater than 10 pounds for 6-8 weeks.
- No driving while you are taking narcotic pain medications or muscle relaxants
- No impact exercises for 6 weeks during the post-operative period. This includes running, jogging, aerobics, golfing, etc.
- No smoking as this increases the chance that the bone will not heal properly.

What symptoms are normal after surgery?

- You may experience some swelling beneath the skin, followed by swelling around the eye on the side of the operation. Fluid from the brain must travel back towards the heart, passing the eye and face along the way.
- You may notice discoloration or bruising may follow the fluid as it travels back to the heart.
- Some patients may hear a “clicking” sound at the bone flap site. This will resolve as the bone heals. It can take between six months to one year for complete healing.

What symptoms should I be worried about after surgery?

- **Signs of infection**
 - Excessive redness or warmth at incision site
 - Increase in pain or swelling of incision site
 - Pink, yellow, green, or foul smelling drainage from incision site

- Fever greater than 100.5
- Headaches, blurred vision or dizziness that worsen when upright and improve when lying down.
- New or increased pain/numbness/weakness in your arms or legs
- Unusual abdominal swelling and or inability to have a bowel movement
- **If you experience any of these symptoms please call our office at 720-441-4021**

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