



CERVICAL SPINE SURGERY

Post-Op Instructions

FOLLOW UP

Please schedule a follow-up appointment with the office for **two weeks after surgery**.

ACTIVITY

- **Walking:** Encouraged daily. Increase distance and duration of walking on a daily basis.
- **Stairs:** Climb stairs as needed.
- **Lifting: 10 lbs. lifting limit** until your follow-up appointment.
- **Reaching: Minimize reaching overhead.**
- **Driving: No driving** while on pain medication or muscle relaxants.
- **Physical Therapy:** Will be arranged at the first follow-up appointment if needed.

INCISION CARE

- **Dressing Change:** Change dressing daily beginning **two days after your surgery and until your two-week post-operative visit.**
- **Hygiene:** Keep incision clean and dry. **Do not apply ointments to incision.**
- **Showering:** Do not shower until there is no drainage from incision. Drainage usually stops within 3–4 days post-op.
 - When showering, **you must keep the incision dry.**
 - Change dressing **immediately** after showering.
- **Restrictions:** No bath, hot tub, or sauna for **six weeks post-op.**
- **Monitoring:** Take your temperature twice a day (morning and afternoon) for **seven days.**

POST-OP MEDICATIONS

- **Prescriptions:** Take pain medications **only as prescribed.**
- **Ice Therapy:** Apply ice to the area of incision for **30 minutes** at a time, multiple times per day. This provides additional pain control and helps reduce swelling.
- **Bowel Health:** Obtain over-the-counter stool softeners (e.g., Colace, Dulcolax, or Miralax) to take post-operatively while using pain medications. Follow instructions as written on label.
 - Use an enema if more than **four days** pass without a bowel movement.
- **Refills:** Monitor need for a refill of pain medications closely. Contact your pharmacy for a refill **48 hours** before the refill is required. Pain medications will **not** be refilled after business hours or on weekends.
- **Anti-inflammatories: Do not take anti-inflammatory medications** for **six weeks** after surgery.
- *Examples include:* Advil®, Aleve®, Aspirin, Celebrex®, Diclofenac, Excedrin®, Ibuprofen, Midol®, Motrin®, Mobic®, Naproxen.

DENTAL CLEANING / ORAL SURGERY

No oral surgery or dental cleaning within **two weeks prior to surgery** and **six weeks post-op** unless approval is granted from the Spine Staff.



RETURN TO WORK

- **0–2 Weeks Post-Op:** Anticipate no work. Further time off determined at follow-up visits.
- **2–3 Weeks Post-Op:** Light to sedentary work may be possible.
- **Heavy Work:** Return to heavy work may take up to **six weeks post-op**.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE

Contact the office immediately if you experience:

- Temperature above **101.5°F** (38.8°C).
- Clear or excessive drainage, redness, or swelling of incision.
- Increase in pain or new weakness to extremities.
- New onset of calf pain or swelling to lower extremities.
- Difficulty urinating or having bowel movements.
- **Increased difficulty in swallowing.**
- Headache that worsens when standing and resolves when lying flat.
- **EMERGENCY:** If any difficulty in breathing, go directly to the **ER or call 911**.