



Wound Care

- Remove dressing second day after surgery.
 - Front of neck: After removing dressing, leave open to air.
 - Back of neck/back: Keep incision covered.
 - Change dressing daily.
- Do not apply any creams or ointments to incision.
- Notify us immediately if you experience any of the following: Redness, swelling, excessive discharge, pus, separation of incision, fever >100.9F

Showering & Bathing

- You may shower 48 hours after your surgery
- If you have a waterproof dressing (yellow plastic or clear plastic), you may shower the day after surgery, **leaving dressing in place.**
- Do not submerge incision in water. Allow soap/water to run over incision and pat dry when finished. Do not scrub incision.

Medications

- Take medications as prescribed.
- Do not abruptly stop taking medications without discussing with your spine provider. This can result in very high pain levels.
- Refill requests should be initiated through your pharmacy. Allow 2 business days for refills to be processed.
- We are unable to refill medications after hours. - Some refills are unable to be refilled by phone.

Diet

- After surgery, it is not uncommon to experience sore throat or GI upset. Start by eating soft foods such as applesauce, mashed potatoes. Avoid spicy food or fast food to allow your stomach to recover. You may increase to regular diet as tolerated.
- If you had surgery on the front of your neck, avoid items that may be difficult to swallow, such as steak.

Brace

- If you had neck surgery, wear your neck brace anytime you are out of bed during the day.
- you may use soft collar at night.

Activity

- Avoid BLTs: No bending, lifting >10lbs (gallon of milk) and twisting.
- Restrictions remain in place until cleared by your spine provider, generally 4 weeks after surgery.
- Walking is your only activity until cleared by your spine provider.
- Avoid prolonged bed rest.

Driving

- No driving while taking narcotics (opioid pain medications) or other sedating medications. No driving until cleared by your spine provider.
- If you wear a neck brace, you may need to modify your mirrors to operate vehicle without twisting.

Travel

- No airline travel for 4 weeks.
- During any travel >1hr, stop to walk every hour to prevent blood clots.

Follow up Appointments

- Your first follow up appointment should be within 10-14 days from your surgery. Call the office if not scheduled.
- X-rays will be taken at follow up appointments
- Appointment schedule is generally as follows:
 - 10-14days, 4-6wk, 3month, 6month (fusion patients), 12month (fusion patients)

Concerning Symptoms

- Notify our office immediately if you experience
 - Fever >100.9
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Worsening voice hoarseness, calf pain, leg swelling
 - New/worsening extremity pain, numbness, weakness
 - New bowel or bladder incontinence
 - New numbness with urination/defecation