

Discharge Instructions

Follow Up Appointment: _____

If you do not have a 2-week follow-up appointment scheduled, please call the office

Activity

- Up as tolerated
- No twisting or bending
- No driving while on narcotics
- Increase your fluid intake

Wound Care

- Change dressing as needed; apply dry gauze/telfa dressing
- Apply ice pack for 20 -30 minutes; 4-6 times per day
- You may shower 72 hrs AFTER surgery
- If you have staples or sutures, keep your incision dry for the first 3 days after surgery
- AFTER 3 DAYS, the staple or suture line may be washed in the shower. However, don't soak the incision in the tub or swimming pool until it has healed well, (usually by the first post-op visit)
- If you have steri-strips, keep them covered by gauze and plastic when showering
- If you have staples (difficult closures or multiple surgeries), then you will need to be seen in the office two weeks after surgery for staple removal

MUST NOTIFY OFFICE IF:

- A low-grade fever is common a few days after surgery. If a temperature persists after you are discharged, you should take your temperature 4 times a day until your temperature is below 100 F for 24 hrs. Call if the elevated temperature persists for more than 48 hrs and/or your temperature goes above 101 F.
- Increased redness around the incision
- Wound drainage
- Constipation is common a few days after surgery due to the pain medications. Continue stool softeners until you are passing regular bowel movements. Call if this problem persists after 3 days. Try to eat fiber foods; fruit with skin on it, salads, prune juice.

ACTIVITY:

- Limit your sitting for the first 2 weeks
 - Standing, reclining, lying down and walking are the best positions
- Sitting a long time in any one position will be uncomfortable and it is better to change positions frequently
- Walking is excellent, just DON'T overdo it!!
- Exercises of the upper body are alright after 2-3 weeks only if **light weights** are used and the **back is protected** with brace on!
- Avoid sexual activity for 2-3 weeks
- Avoid twisting, bending, and stooping for the first 2-3 weeks after a discectomy or decompression. If a fusion was performed, then these activities will be limited for 3 months.
- No heavy lifting for 3 months. **DO NOT** lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk.
- If you undergo a fusion, you will be given a brace, **which is to be worn whenever you are up and around, out of bed**
- **YOU DO NOT NEED TO SLEEP WITH BRACE ON, OR SIT WITH BRACE ON**

LUMBAR CORSET

This is a lighter brace, usually worn after non-instrumented surgeries (i.e. lumbar discectomies) for comfort, or when the rigid brace has been removed after a fusion. The brace may also be used for occasional support after a discectomy or laminectomy has been performed. The corset brace is normally optional and does not need to be worn at all times.

NECK BRACE/LUMBAR BRACE

After a fusion is performed, bracing is usually prescribed for 3 months. You will be scheduled for an appointment to be fitted for your brace, prior to your operation. The use of your brace is a very important part of your recovery. It is vital that you wear it as directed.

Usually the brace can be removed and replaced while standing at the bedside or lying down. In addition, patients are generally allowed to use the restroom without having to put on the brace. However, longer periods out of bed or the recliner should be spent with the brace on (and snug).

HOME HEALTH CARE:

A home health care agency will be assigned to you by Jagannathan Neurosurgery. You do have the right to request a specific facility. However, keep in mind, that your insurance may put restrictions on your choices.

Your home health care staff will call the day after you are discharged from the hospital to make plans to visit you at home.

Contact the home health care agency you have been assigned if you have further questions.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

You will be evaluated by a therapist associated with your home care. The determination of physical therapy is made based on your preoperative condition.

Physical therapy is generally not necessary except to:

- Provide strengthening if weakness is present
- Provide a home exercise program for overall back strengthening and improved **flexibility**

Laminectomy

- Physical Therapy is often prescribed in the hospital after surgery for assistance with walking and general strengthening
- Home or outpatient Physical Therapy may also be prescribed if indicated

Fusion

- Physical Therapy will be prescribed in the hospital and is usually also done at home or on an outpatient basis (at the clinic).
- A conditioning program will likely be started once the brace is no longer necessary

X – RAYS:

- If a fusion is performed, follow-up x-rays are necessary
- Your first post-operative x-ray will be performed before you are discharged from the hospital
- A follow-up x-ray will then be performed in 3 months to evaluate the instrumentation and the alignment of your spine. Subsequent x-rays are often required after this point (often yearly) to monitor the instrumentation and fusion.
- Have the x-rays taken as close to your scheduled appointment as possible (1-3 days) and bring the disc with you to scheduled appointment. It is helpful to bring all the discs you have comparison; pre-op and post-op.

POST OPERATIVE MEDICATIONS:

****Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking narcotics****

Narcotic analgesics will usually be prescribed for the early post-operative period. Muscle relaxants will most likely be helpful, and also be prescribed.

**** Medications will be given for a three-month duration. After this healing period, your pain management will return to your primary care physician or pain management physician.**

NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs), eg; Ibuprofen, Naproxen, Diclofenac, Motrin, Motrin IB, Advil, Aleve, Naprosyn, Voltaren, etc, impair the fusion process and are not allowed for 6 weeks after a fusion. However, there is evidence to suggest that some of the newer drugs such as Celebrex may not be a problem, although Dr. Jagannathan does not recommend taking NSAIDS initially after surgery.

****Note: If you notice you are running low on medications, please communicate with the nurse.**

****Note:** Please expect 4-5 days for your new prescriptions to arrive via mail; due to the physician being based out of Troy, and the prescription being a narcotic.

****Note:** Please keep holidays and weekends in mind when requesting refills.

DRIVING OR FLYING:

****Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while taking narcotics****

We always recommend seeing your primary care doctor before embarking on any trip to ensure that your general medical condition is safe to drive.

For most minimally invasive surgery patients, you may begin once you are sufficiently comfortable to do so.

Avoid sitting for more than one (1) hour and, if necessary, take stops every hour to walk for a few minutes.

For patients who must fly (such as out-of-town or out-of-country patients), we prefer that you remain in the area for at least 3 days postoperatively. First or Business Class seating accommodations are much preferred when returning to your home. For all others (including Spinal Cord Tumor patients) we recommend delaying trips for at least 2-6 weeks unless absolutely necessary.

DISABILITY:

Our office is happy to help you with temporary disability for the duration of three months post-operatively. If you are requesting to be off work until your surgery, it is then the responsibility of your primary care. If you are requesting disability to extend beyond those three months, it is the responsibility of your primary care.

Have the necessary paperwork drawn up from your employer or insurance company as soon as possible. For the best service, bring to the office prior to surgery and allow enough time for the nurse to complete the forms.

THANK YOU FOR WORKING WITH US!!

Please contact our office for any questions or concerns regarding your surgery.

West Branch Office.....(989) 701-2538

Troy Office.....(248) 792-6527

Sault Sainte Marie Office.....(906) 253-1341

Our office hours are 9 AM -5 PM Monday through Friday

Nursing Line:

West Branch Office.....(989) 528-9493

Troy Office.....(248) 550-3803

Sault Sainte Marie.....(575) 750-4519

For emergencies, including falling, bleeding, extreme pain, vomiting, high fever please seek immediate medical attention, go or contact your local **Emergency Room**.