

The Spine Institute

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POST OPERATIVE/HOME INSTRUCTIONS Following Spine Surgery

**Please call our office the day of your release from the hospital to schedule a post-operative appointment. If you do not already have an appointment scheduled, you should be seen 7-10 days after a decompression/laminectomy and 10-14 days after a spinal fusion.

**Please call the office if any of the following occur:
Persistent fever (> 101 degrees) or chills
Drainage/redness/pus or increased swelling of incision
Worsening pain
Loss of control of your bladder or bowels
Any symptoms that cause you to worry

****YOU MUST KEEP YOUR WOUND CLEAN AND DRY. Change dressing daily or every other day. Keep it clean and dry.** Sponge baths or showers are okay, if the wound is covered with a waterproof dressing (i.e. saran wrap and tape). No baths until incision is completely healed. The bandage may be removed or replaced with dry sterile gauze pads 3 days following surgery or daily after. Leave steri strips across the incision intact.

**If a brace is prescribed, wear it as instructed.

** **Restrictions** after surgery are as follows: No pushing or pulling, bending, twisting, reaching, or lifting over 10lbs. for 3 weeks after a decompression/laminectomy and 3 months after a lumbar fusion. You may walk, use stairs or ride in a car as you feel comfortable. You should not drive until you are released to do so; you should not drive while taking pain narcotics. Ask at your first post-operative visit.

Constipation is a very common problem following surgical procedures and taking narcotics. **The key is prevention!! It is recommended to take a stool softener (docusate sodium, Colace or Kaopectate) while using narcotics. Make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids and eating lots of fiber. **Mild constipation:** In addition to a stool softener, you may use a gentle laxative (Miralax, Dulcolax, Correctol or Senokot) daily until you have a bowel movement. **Severe Constipation:** If you have tried the above, you may use a rectal suppository, enema or powder (GoLytely, magnesium citrate or a Fleet enema) and may need to do this more than once. If none of the above is successful, then you should go to the emergency room. REMEMBER: only use laxatives if you are passing gas.

**If you have had a FUSION, you should NOT take NSAID medications (Ibuprofen, Aleve, Celebrex, Voltaren, Daypro, ect.) for 3 months and getting x-rays in our office. Ask the doctor when it is okay to re-start these medications.

**No dental cleanings or procedures for 4-6 months after operation. If you have an emergent dental need, call the office and discuss with us in advance.

MEDICATIONS

PLEASE NOTE: PLAN AHEAD AND DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED YOUR SUPPLY OF MEDICATION BEFORE CALLING. **NARCOTICS CANNOT BE CALLED IN** AND YOU WILL NEED TO PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ROUTINE PRESCRIPTION REFILLS WILL NOT BE MADE AFTER NORMAL OFFICE HOURS.