



## **Discharge Instructions – Cervical Surgery**

### **Your Collar**

You will be given a cervical collar to wear postoperatively. You must wear the collar at all times, except for hygiene, until seen in the office for your first post-operative visit.

### **Showering**

You may shower as normal once the large, bulky bandages are removed from your incisions. If they are not removed before your discharge from the hospital, you may remove them 36-48 hours after your surgery. Hair washing is permissible while in the shower. No tub baths, hot tubs or whirlpools until seen in the office.

### **Exercise**

You have unlimited walking and stair climbing privileges. Walking outside (in nice weather only) or walking on a treadmill without an is also allowed.

Do NOT lift anything weighing greater than 10-15 lbs. Especially try to avoid lifting or reaching above your head.

### **Incision**

Please make sure your incisions are checked at least twice daily for signs and symptoms of infection. If any of the following should occur, please call the office:

- Drainage from incision site
- Opening of incisions
- Fevers greater than 101 degrees
- Flu-like symptoms
- Increased redness and/or tenderness

There are usually small tape strips directly on the skin over the wound. These strips typically fall off in the shower or can be removed after two weeks. If you have staples or sutures instead of tape on your incision, they will also need to be removed two weeks following your surgery. This will be done at your first follow up visit at our office.

### **Sleeping**

You may sleep in any comfortable position as long as your collar is securely in place. Many patients find comfort sleeping in a recliner chair. It is normal to have difficulty sleeping for the first several weeks following your surgery. We recommend trying Benadryl or Tylenol PM for help sleeping. Both are over-the-counter and can be found in drugstores.

### **Eating**

It is normal to have a sore throat and some difficulty swallowing solid foods after your surgery. This may persist for several weeks. Eating soft foods like yogurt, macaroni and mashed potatoes seem to help.



### **Pain**

- If you feel you need pain medicine, you may take regular or extra-strength Tylenol. Do NOT take an anti-inflammatory medication such as Advil, Aleve, or Motrin for the first 10 weeks following your surgery. Anti-inflammatory medications like these hinder bone growth and healing, which is critical in the weeks following surgery.
- Do not resume taking Fosamax for eight weeks after your fusion surgery.
- To help alleviate persistent soreness around the bone graft site or between the shoulder blades, apply ice or warm moist compresses. It is normal for graft discomfort to persist for several weeks following your surgery. The best thing to do is keep walking and strengthen the hip muscle.

### **Driving**

You may NOT drive a car until told otherwise by your physician. You may be a passenger for short distances (about 20-30 minutes.) If you must take a longer trip, be sure to make several pit stops so that you can walk and stretch your legs. Reclining in the passenger seat seems to be the most comfortable position for most patients. In some states, it is illegal to drive a car while wearing a cervical orthosis.

### **Follow-Up Appointments**

When you are discharged from the hospital, a follow up appointment will be made for 2-3 weeks from your surgery date. Call 864-234-9994 to confirm your appointment.

### **Questions or Concerns**

If you have additional questions or concerns, call our office at 234-7654.