



The Spine Care Center & Spine Care Associates

Restoring Function. Relieving Pain.

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Discharge Instructions

Please be sure to read this entire page of instructions (front and back)

You will be following up in the office approximately *2 weeks* after your surgery

To reduce the risk of infection:

- Keep incision dry and change your dressing daily starting 48 hours after surgery
- Look at the incision every day, checking for signs of infection (see below).

DO NOT:

- Scrub or rub incisions.
- Remove the tape strips (such as Steri-Strips) from incisions if applicable.
- Use lotions, ointments or powder on incisions.
- No bending, twisting, pushing, pulling or lifting greater than 5-8 pounds. (This is approximately the weight of a gallon of milk)
- Take a bath unless you can keep the incision dry. Instead, take showers or sponge baths until your doctor says it's okay to take baths.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking narcotic medication.

You may notice some soreness, tenderness, tingling, numbness, and itching around the incision. There may also be mild oozing, drops of blood and bruising, and a small lump may form. This is normal and no cause for concern.

Call your doctor if you notice signs of an infection, such as:

- A yellow or green discharge that is increasing.
- A change in the odor of the discharge.
- A change in the size of the incision.
- Redness or hardening of the surrounding area.
- The incision is hot to the touch.
- Fever greater than 101° F (38° C)
- Increasing or unusual pain.
- Excessive bleeding that has soaked through the dressing.
- Swelling of extremities
- With any questions or concerns

Bracing

For Lumbar Surgeries: An LSO Brace may be supplied to you prior to surgery. Please begin use of this medical equipment 3 days after your surgery and wear during any type of activity except when laying down flat until your first post-operative appointment. At that time, you will be informed whether to continue or discontinue use. Depending on multiple factors specific to your case, your doctor may choose to order a bone stimulator after surgery to aid in your recovery.

Changing a dressing

Before you start, make sure you have gauze pads, a box of medical gloves, surgical tape, a plastic bag, and scissors. Then:

1. Prepare supplies by opening the gauze packages and cutting new tape strips.
2. Put on medical gloves.
3. Loosen the tape around the old dressing.
4. Remove the old dressing.
5. Remove the gloves. At this point, clean the incision if your doctor told you to do so. (See instructions below.)
6. Wash your hands and put on another pair of medical gloves.
7. Inspect the incision for signs of infection.
8. Hold a clean, sterile gauze pad by the corner and place over the incision.
9. Tape all four sides of the gauze pad.
10. Put all trash, including gloves, in a plastic bag.
11. Seal plastic bag and throw it away.
12. Wash your hands.

Cleaning an incision

To clean the incision:

- Gently wash around the incision with soap and water.
- Do not scrub or soak the wound.
- Do not use rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, or iodine, which can harm the tissue and slow wound healing.
- Air-dry the incision or pat it dry with a clean, fresh towel before reapplying the dressing.

Constipation Prevention

- Drink 8-10 glasses of water each day
- Maintain a healthy, high protein/high fiber diet (fruits, vegetables, beans and bran cereal, etc.)
- Make a goal to have a bowel movement each day or return to your pre-operative bowel habits.
- Drinking a warm liquid may help stimulate a bowel movement.
- Avoid large portions of starchy foods such as white pasta, pastries, cheeses and rice
- Medications for constipation may have been prescribed to you at your pre-op appointment. (PLEASE TAKE THESE AS PRESCRIBED)