

Post Operative Instructions: Lumbar Fusion

Diet: Advance to regular diet.

Medications:

For post operative pain relief, you may use Tylenol or you may be prescribed a narcotic pain medication with or without Tylenol, as prescribed. You may also be given muscle relaxants. During the healing phase avoid any type of aspirin, aspirin-like products or anti-inflammatory. These have been proven to decrease the healing rate.

Activity and Restrictions:

1. If you have been given a brace, it is to be worn when out of bed. If the brace is irritating to your skin or your wound, it may need adjusting or refitted by the office or the brace maker. Please call us if this occurs.
2. You should not drive until you are clear by your surgeon.
Following such an operation, you may find that your reaction times are slow because of pain, generalized fatigue, stress of surgery, and prescribed pain medication. You may ride in a car and may find it more comfortable in a reclined position or in the back seat. If you are planning to take long trips, please try to take interval breaks, every 45 minutes, getting out of the car and walking short distances.
3. You may take short walks inside and outside of your home. You may use a walker if needed for comfort. You may go up and down stairs.
4. You are to avoid any work, housework, snow shoveling and lifting of more than a few pounds, as well as any strenuous activity.
5. Do not begin any type of an exercise program or sports program until you are instructed to do so.
6. If you smoke, remember that smoking impairs healing of bone and thus slows or decreases the rate of your recovery, possibly leading to poor results. Smoking cessation will not only help you heal but will improve your general health.
7. We do not recommend using hot packs to the lower back while you are healing. Hot packs will increase blood flow, increase swelling and increase discomfort early on in your healing phase.

Wound Care:

1. The majority of spinal fusion patients have their wounds stapled closed. The staples will be removed anywhere from 7 to 14 days from surgery. A visiting nurse may do this or it may be done in our office during a post-op visit.
2. The wound is to be kept clean and dry. You may shower after approximately 4 days with an occlusive dressing. If the wound does become wet, please blot it dry and apply a new clean sterile dressing.
3. We recommend a clean dry sterile dressing on an everyday basis or as needed if the wound is draining small amounts.
4. If you develop fevers, chills, draining from your wound or have unrelenting pain despite medication, please contact us at (585) 295-5355 or out of area (800) 724-7712.