

**A PATIENT'S GUIDE TO SPINE SURGERY****PLEASE REVIEW THE FOLLOWING POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS****1. You are advised to go directly home from the Hospital****2. WOUND CARE**

- a. Unless otherwise instructed, you may shower the day after your surgery.
- b. Dressing changes will start approximately **24 hours** after your surgery. Change your dressing daily after a shower. You may keep your incision open to air for approximately 20 minutes. **DO NOT** remove the **Steri- Strips (white tape on incision)**. These will be removed at your first postoperative visit. **DO NOT** place any antibiotic creams, gels, or salves on your incision. If you have an incision in the front of your neck or abdomen a dressing is not required. You can apply a dressing if desired.
- c. If there is drainage from your incision or if it is soiled please clean it with peroxide and water, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ then apply a clean dressing.
- d. Always be alert for signs of infection that consist of *redness, swelling, heat, increased drainage and fever*. **Call your health care provider immediately if you have any of these signs of infection.**

3. DIET

- a. If you are having outpatient surgery, prior to your discharge from the hospital, the nurses will make sure that you are tolerating fluids well. It is advised to gradually increase your diet once you are at home. Start off with *clear liquids, bouillon, toast, soda, crackers, and Jell-O*. If you are not nauseated, you may increase your food intake. **Greasy, spicy foods and dairy products are not advised for the first 24 hours**. If you were not done as an outpatient, eat foods that you can tolerate. *If nausea and / or vomiting continue please call your doctor or the anesthesiologist.*
- b. If you were on a regular diet at the hospital when discharged you may proceed with a regular diet. The combination of surgery, anesthesia, pain medication, and a decreased activity level may contribute to constipation postoperatively. Using an over-the-counter stool softener while taking pain medication may prevent constipation.

4. MEDICATION

- a. **You will be given pain medication to use postoperatively; this will be given to you either at your presurgical conference or at the time of discharge from the hospital.**
- b. **TAKE YOUR MEDICATION AS INSTRUCTED.** You do not need to take the maximum dose if your symptoms are not severe. You can use over the counter pain reliever if it controls your symptoms. **Do not take your over the counter pain reliever and your narcotic at the same time.**
- c. You should inform your pharmacist regarding any other medication you are taking daily to assure there are no reactions with the medication you are being prescribed.
- d. **Do not take any medication that is not prescribed for you.**
- e. For prescription refills, contact your Pharmacy and they will contact us. **Please allow 48 hours for all prescription refills.**

5. PRECAUTIONS

- a. You are not to drive a vehicle or operate any machinery until you feel safe and are without any pain medication.
- b. **DO NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WHILE TAKING PAIN MEDICATIONS.**
- c. If you were sent home the same day as your surgery, have a responsible adult at home with you for the evening.

SPINAL DISORDERS

d. You may return to work if you are safe and can meet the restrictions of no lifting, bending, or twisting of the surgical area (unless instructed otherwise).

6. ACTIVITY

- a. Resting for the day of surgery.
- b. Begin walking the day following surgery as instructed. Try to walk one mile a day by the first week.
- c. **NO LIFTING GREATER THAN 10 to 15 POUNDS AND NO BENDING AT THE SURGICAL AREA FOR APPROXIMATELY 6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE (NO BLT- no BEND – LIFT – TWIST)**
- d. If you have specific instructions regarding your limitations / restrictions postoperatively – **you are to follow those.**

7. BRACE

- a. If you were provided with a brace either for your neck or back follow the instructions provided to you.

8. FOLLOW – UP INSTRUCTIONS

- a. If not already done, please make a post – op follow up appointment in 8 – 10 days.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please call 303-287-2800.
