

After your SPINE SURGERY

Thank you for choosing us to take care of you! We look forward to helping you feel better. Please note that these are general instructions and some details may vary depending on your condition and procedure.

Care of your incision:

- You may remove your bandage on the second day after your surgery.
- You have absorbable sutures under the skin.
- You should take a brief soap and water **shower daily** (3 minutes) and pat it dry gently. Do not immerse your wound in a tub, pool, or spa before your follow-up visit.
- If you have **Dermabond** (clear, shiny, skin glue) you should shower daily and pat dry. You do not need a dressing but may wear one for comfort. The dermabond will crumble and peel off in 7-10 days after your surgery. Do not scrub, pick, or peel it.
- If you have visible **external sutures or staples**, you will need to return to the office to have them removed in about 2 weeks. You should still take a quick soap and water shower daily, and then recover the incision with a dry, sterile dressing.
- Do not put any creams, lotions, or ointments on your incision unless directed.
- It is normal to have small amounts of clear, yellow, or pink drainage from your incision for the first week.

Pain management:

- **Some pain after surgery is normal and expected.** A prescription for narcotic pain medication has been provided for pain related to the surgery. Take it only as prescribed and only as needed.
- If your surgery was not a fusion, you may wish to supplement your pain medication with naproxen (Aleve) or ibuprofen (Advil) as directed on the bottle. Do not use acetaminophen (Tylenol) if it is in your prescription pain medication.
- If you received a prescription for **muscle relaxers** please take them as directed. They help with pain from spasms as muscles heal and reduce the need for narcotic pain medications.
- It is common to have some nerve pain as the nerves wake up and heal. Sometimes patients describe these as “zingers” or “pins and needles”. If you are having severe **nerve pain**, please let us know. Sometimes the nerve will hurt as it heals, and there is medication to help with this.
- You may use an icepack for 15 minutes at a time. Please cover with a towel to keep the incision dry.
- Prescription pain medication and your anesthesia can contribute to significant **constipation**. To prevent this, please increase your fluid and fiber intake and take an over-the-counter stool softener such as Colace until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication.
- **YOU MAY NOT DRIVE while taking narcotic pain medication.** Please wait 8 hours after your last dose before driving.
- Our role is to treat your post-surgical pain. If you have chronic pain and receive pain medications from your primary care or other physician, please contact them for instructions and refills.
- It is your responsibility to keep your medications safe and secure. We cannot refill medications if your pills or prescription are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Medications:

- You should have received a list of your medications and instructions from the hospital or surgery center before your discharge. In general all medications you were taking before surgery can be resumed the day after your discharge EXCEPT for anti-inflammatory medications and blood thinners. Ask for specific instructions about resuming blood thinner medications.

Activity:

- Take it easy for the first two weeks. You may walk and gradually increase your distances but allow yourself to rest during this time.
- You may not lift more than 5-10 pounds until your follow-up visit. Please avoid bending, twisting, and stooping.
- You may resume sexual activity after two weeks. Be passive initially.
- Exercise programs, recreational activities, and returning to work may be discussed with the doctor or nurse practitioner at your follow-up visit.
- You may ride in a car, but you should not drive unless you are no longer taking pain medications and are not wearing a neck brace.
- If you had a LUMBAR FUSION, you should wear your brace at all times that you are out of bed for more than 5 minutes until the doctor/ARNP tells you otherwise, usually about three months. You can drive with your lumbar brace on.

Follow-up with Dr. Lee or Kim Langford, ARNP:

You should have a follow-up appointment in 2-3 weeks. If you have staples they will be removed at your follow-up visit. You may also get new x-rays at the visit. You may see Dr. Lee or Kim Langford, ARNP at that visit.

CALL THE OFFICE: 850-877-8174

- If you experience a change in your wound site (increased pain, redness, warm to touch, swelling, thick or foul-smelling drainage). Please take your temperature before calling the office. Call for fever over 101 degrees F.
- If you do not already have a follow-up appointment scheduled
- If you need a refill on your medications: You will likely need to leave a message for our medical assistant. Medication refills and changes have to be approved by the doctor or ARNP, and we cannot guarantee same-day refills, especially if you call after 2PM. You should **call at least 3 business days before you need the medication**. You can expedite the process and avoid interruptions in your medication if you leave the following details in the message:
 - Please state and spell your name clearly
 - Date of Birth
 - Date and type of surgery
 - Where is your pain? Does it radiate?
 - How severe (on a scale of 1-10)?
 - How much medication are you taking and what type?
 - Name and phone number of your pharmacy