



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS SPINE SURGERY

After your surgery there are several points we would like you to keep in mind. Most patients will be able to maintain a fairly normal level of activity following surgery. We do ask that you adhere to the activity restrictions described, as well as note some of the other care instructions. We value your health, well-being and comfort. If you do have any questions or issues related to your recent lumbar spine surgery, please feel free to call our office at **301-585-7900**. Please leave a message and one of our practitioners will return your call.

Activity Restrictions

- Refrain from lifting, pushing, stooping or straining for at least 6 weeks. For most patients, this means lifting nothing heavier than 15-20 lbs for the first 4 weeks; and no lifting objects above shoulder level.
- Depending on the type of surgery you had, we may ask you not attempt any significant lifting or straining activities for up to 3 months.

Dressing Removal & Wound Care

- You may be discharged from the hospital with a dressing over the incision. We ask that you remove the dressing within 1-2 days following your surgery.
- You may have tiny strips of tape over the incision, called steri-strips. These usually fall off after 5-7 days; usually with showering. We ask that you remove any steri-strips that remain within 7 days of your surgery.
- If you have staples/sutures, they need to be removed within 7-10 days following surgery. Please call our office to setup an appointment for suture/staple removal.
- We ask that you monitor your incision for any significant swelling, redness or drainage and notify us promptly if you notice any of the above.

Showering & Bathing

- You may shower within 48 hours of your procedure. We ask that you refrain from soaking in a bathtub, hot tub or pool for the first four weeks.
- Do not scrub the incision

Eating & Drinking

- You may resume a normal diet following your procedure.

Constipation

- You may be constipated after your surgery, so increase your intake of fiber (fruits and vegetables) and fluid (unless instructed otherwise).
- You may use your choice of over-the-counter laxatives (such as Senokot S, Dulcolax, Colace, or Milk of Magnesia).

- If you do not have a bowel movement, use an over-the-counter enema (i.e. Fleets Enema) as indicated on the bottle.
- If you are still unable to have a bowel movement, or have nausea, vomiting or abdominal bloating, contact your family doctor for instructions.

Medications Blood Thinners

- You may resume your usual medications immediately after surgery, with the exception of any blood thinning agents, anti-inflammatory agents and aspirin based products. Blood thinning agents such as coumadin, plavix, heparin and aggrenox may usually be restarted within 5 days of surgery, so long as there has been no recent incisional swelling or drainage. We will specify when it is okay to resume these medications.

Anti-Inflammatory Medicine

- If you have had a neck or lumbar fusion, we ask that you not take any non steroidal anti-inflammatory medications for at least 12 weeks following surgery. These include aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen sodium. These agents can delay the healing process as it relates to bony fusion. If you need to take aspirin for heart disease or stroke risk, we ask that you resume this within 48 hours of surgery.

Smoking

- We ask that you refrain from smoking. Smoking delays the healing process and increases the risk that a fusion will not take place.

Return to Work

- Dr. Amini will inform you when you can. It usually occurs between the 2nd and 4th week with increasing work hours.
- Please bring any FMLA paperwork to the office for us to fill out.

Office Follow Up

We recommend regular office follow-ups following your spine surgery. For patients undergoing spine surgery we recommend follow-up at 2 weeks after surgery then 4 weeks, 3 months and 6 months. For patients undergoing a fusion, we usually recommend with x-rays to be taken prior to your visits. Please bring imaging studies (on a CD) for us to review during your appointment. If you develop any new signs or symptoms before a scheduled follow up and need to be seen, please contact our office.

If you are not able to keep this appointment please call our office to reschedule.

*Please call our office at **301-585-7900** if you notice any of the following signs or symptoms:*

- Fever with a temperature greater than 101.5 degrees F.
- Worsening back or leg pain with or without new neurologic symptoms
- New neurologic symptoms including leg weakness, incontinence, inability to urinate or defecate.
- Swollen, painful calf with or without fever.
- Significant redness, swelling or drainage from the incision site.
- Significant clear fluid drainage from the incision site.

NOTE: If you are unable to reach our office and have noticed any of the above conditions, please report to the nearest Emergency Room for prompt medical attention.