

## **Most frequently asked questions after a spine surgery**

- **How long should I expect to be off from work?** Expect to be off from work for at least 3-12 weeks, depending on your occupation. You are advised to discuss your personal work situation with the provider as well as expected time off.
- **When can I drive?** You may not drive a car if you are taking narcotics or if you are wearing a collar. You may ride in a car for short distances. If you take a longer trip, be sure to make several stops so you can walk around and stretch.
- **When do I follow-up after surgery?** You will follow-up at 6 weeks and 12 weeks post op. Your appointment will be given to you prior to discharge. Additional appointments such as wound check or staple/suture removal will be given to you if required for 10-14 days after your surgery.
- **Do I have restrictions?** No lifting greater than 10 lbs. Try to avoid excessive bending/twisting. If an activity makes you grunt, strain or sweat, you should not perform this activity.
- **When can I take anti-inflammatories?** No anti-inflammatory medications for the first six weeks following surgery. If you have weaned from your pain medication, you may take Tylenol as needed.
- **What to expect after surgery?** You will be sore in the area of surgery. You may also have some difficulty swallowing. This will gradually improve with time. Eating soft foods will help. Keeping your head elevated for 1-2 weeks will also help. You may also have some back stiffness and discomfort in between the shoulder blades for several weeks.
- **What position can I sleep in?** You may sleep in any position which will make you comfortable. Make sure your collar is on correctly and securely, if we order one for you.
- **What exercises can I perform?** Walking on a treadmill or outside is ok. Avoid inclination or treacherous grounds. Climbing stairs is ok. We will determine when you may resume other exercises or activities at your six-week post op visit.
- **How often do I wear the cervical collar?** Wear a soft or hard collar at all times. The collar may be removed for showering. You should hold your head still.
- **When can I shower?** You may shower the next day, being careful not to get the wound saturated. The wound can be covered while in the shower for the first 3-4 days. Hair washing is ok in the shower. Avoid bathtubs, hot tubs, and whirlpools. Do not scrub the wound.
- **Should I have my wound evaluated daily?** Make sure your incision site is checked at least twice daily for signs and symptoms of infection. Check for drainage from the incision site. Check for the opening of the incision site. If patient has a fever of 101.5 and flu-like symptoms, our office should be contacted and/or report to the ER.