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Discharge Instructions for Cervical Spine Surgery

Please note: These are general guidelines and helpful suggestions for your post-operative recovery period. Everyone progresses at their own individual pace.

Medications:

- a. Resume all previous medications unless instructed otherwise.
- b. Pain medications as prescribed. Take only as needed.
- c. Muscle relaxants as prescribed. Take only as needed.
- d. Over-the-counter **anti-inflammatory such as Advil (ibuprofen), Aleve (naproxen), or aspirin** are **OK** to take; **unless notified by your surgeon or unless you had a FUSION**. Studies have shown that non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDS) may slow or stop bone formation and may inhibit the fusion process.
- e. **NEVER DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF NARCOTIC PAIN RELIEVERS OR MUSCLE RELAXANTS.**

Activities:

- a. Walking is the best exercise after surgery. **NO running or jumping**. You may go up and down stairs if capable. Stay mobile. In general, walk for 10 min every 4 hours unless sleeping/overnight.
- b. **NO lifting greater than 5 pounds. And no lifting overhead.**
- c. **NO bending, twisting, strenuous activities.**
- d. **Avoid prolonged sitting greater than 40 minutes.** Stand and walk after 40 minutes, then you may sit back down.
- e. If your doctor has prescribed a brace for you to wear, please wear it at all times **even while in bed** and during bathing. Make sure the brace is comfortably snug, it should not restrict your breathing.
- f. **NO driving for while in collar and** until cleared by your surgeon.
- g. Your energy level will be decreased for several weeks following surgery.
- h. Be careful to **avoid sudden movements and use good body mechanics**. Keep your back straight and lift with your legs.

Diet:

- a. **For the first 48 hours avoid hot beverages for food. Eat only soft food, soups, oatmeals or any food that is easy to swallow.**
- b. Your appetite may be decreased. It may help to eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- c. Your surgery and narcotic pain medications may cause constipation. If you need a laxative, try 1-2 tablespoons of Metamucil per day, and/or a tablespoon of milk of magnesia in the morning, drink lots of water. Remember to eat fiber, fresh vegetables, prunes, and fresh fruit.

Discharge instructions for cervical spine surgery (continued)

Care of incision:

- a. **Please keep the incision area clean and dry. Do not peel off scabs.**
- b. If dressing is placed, please keep dressing on for the time period as directed on your discharge paperwork. If no time period is mentioned, please see below in section c.
- c. Please change dressing 1-2x per day until drainage stops, then leave incision uncovered except during bathing.
- d. **Do not submerge the incision in a bath tub, hot tub, or swimming pool for 4 weeks.**
- e. **NO showering for 5 days following surgery.**
- f. I will remove steri-strips (if placed) at your follow- appointment. Do not worry if they fall off earlier.
- g. Unless directed, **NO ointments** (such as Neosporin) on the incision.
- h. You may notice some numbness and swelling around your incision which is normal. This should gradually decrease.
- i. If you notice increased swelling, redness, and/or drainage from the incision, please call the office or your surgeon's cell phone (number below).
- j. **You will have some hoarseness and difficulty swallowing after surgery, this is normal. If this worsens at all following surgery or you have any difficulty breathing, notify your surgeon immediately on his cell phone below or proceed to the nearest emergency room.**

Additional instructions:

- a. There is a drain coming through your incision. On the day after your surgery, when you change the dressing (24 hours after surgery), gently **pull the drain out** with the dressing. Do **NOT** remove steri-strips. Place a new dressing.
- b. If you have not already set up your post-operative appointment, please call the office where you were originally seen when you get home to schedule your appointment. I would like to see you **two weeks** following your operation.
- c. Medications can be renewed between the hours of 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00pm-4:00pm,
- d. Monday thru Friday. Please allow 2 business days for refill requests.
- e. It is difficult to refill medications during the weekends or after hours. Please plan ahead.
NO SMOKING. Studies have shown that smoking delays and can stop healing.
If you have any questions or concerns, you can always reach me on my cell phone **216-924-6379....Troy Mounts MD**. If I don't respond to your text please call, if it is already after 11pm please call instead of texting.