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Discharge Instructions for Lumbar Fusion Surgery

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

Medications:

- Resume all previous medications unless instructed otherwise.
- Pain medications as prescribed. Take only as needed.
- Muscle relaxants as prescribed. Take only as needed.
- Do not take any over-the-counter medications without the approval of your doctor.

Studies have shown that non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDS) may slow or stop bone formation and may inhibit the fusion process.

- NEVER DRIVE OR OPERATE MACHINERY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF NARCOTIC PAIN RELIEVERS OR MUSCLE RELAXANTS.**

Activities:

- Walking is the best exercise after surgery. You may go up and down stairs if capable. Stay mobile. In general, walk for 10 min every 4 hours unless sleeping/overnight.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds.
- Do not bend over or twist your body.
- Stand and walk after 40 minutes, then you may sit back down.
- If your doctor has prescribed a brace for you to wear, please wear it at all times except while in bed and during bathing.
- Do not return to work or school until cleared by your doctor.
- Your energy level will be decreased for several weeks following surgery.
- Be careful to keep your back straight and lift with your legs. Keep your feet flat on the floor.

Discharge instructions for lumbar fusion surgery (continued)

Diet:

- a. Your appetite may be decreased. It may help to eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- b. 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.

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. **Do not use**
- f. **Do not** remove steri-strips (if placed) **until instructed by your surgeon.** Do not worry if they fall off earlier.
- g. Unless directed, **do not use 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 **at (714) 835-1100**.

Additional instructions:

- a. If you have not already set up your post-operative appointment, please call the office **at (714) 835-1100** when you get home to schedule your appointment. I would like to see you two weeks following your operation.
- b. Medications are renewed only between the hours of 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00pm-4:00pm, Monday thru Friday. Please allow 2 business days for refill requests.
- c. **NO** medications will be renewed during the weekends or after hours. Please plan ahead.
- d. **Do not**
- e. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always reach me on my cell phone **at (714) 835-1100**. **Do not** call the office if it is already closed. **Do not** please