

Discharge Instructions: Anterior Cervical Fusion

Wound Care

- The incision is covered with skin glue with a gauze and clear adhesive dressing on top.
- You may start showering on the 2nd day after leaving the hospital.
- The gauze and adhesive dressing should be removed prior to showering. While showering, the skin glue is a water-tight barrier. After showering, pat dry the wound and apply a new barrier to prevent the wound rubbing on the neck brace. Gauze and tape or several Band-Aids may be used and can be changed as needed for moisture in the dressing.
- You may **not** submerge the wound under standing water until cleared to do so in the doctor's office (i.e. no baths, hot tubs, or swimming pools).
- The skin glue will fall off on its own. If it begins to peel, carefully trim the glue at the skin edge. This usually takes around 1-2 weeks.

Post-Surgery Pain

- Pain after surgery is normal. You may have some return of your pre-surgery symptoms and this is normal. Overall your pain should slowly decrease. You may have good and bad days.
- The pain medication (Percocet or oxycodone/acetaminophen) may be taken every 4-6 hours as needed for pain.
- The stool softener (Colace) should be taken 2 times a day to prevent constipation. You may stop Colace when you are no longer taking Percocet.

- As your pain decreases, you may stop the Percocet and Colace and switch to over-the-counter Extra-Strength Tylenol which should be taken as directed on the package. Do not take Tylenol and Percocet at the same time.
- You **may not** take any anti-inflammatory pain medications for 3 months after surgery as these can prevent spinal fusion. These medications include Advil, Motrin, ibuprofen, Aleve, Celebrex, meloxicam, Voltaren, and diclofenac.

Post-Surgery Activity

- For single level surgery, please wear the soft neck collar when out of bed.
- For two or more level surgery, please wear the hard neck collar at all times until told to discontinue its use in clinic. You may remove the collar briefly to change the dressing and to shower.
- There are activity restrictions for 6 weeks after surgery: 1) No heavy lifting more than 5lbs. 2) No excessive twisting or bending of your neck.
- You may return to work when your pain is controlled and you are able to follow the above activity restrictions.

Follow-up Visit

- The first follow up visit will usually be 4 weeks following surgery and you will receive an X-Ray prior to your visit.
- If you do not already have your follow up appointment with Dr. Johnson, please call the SpineCare office for assistance: (650) 985-7500.

Please call the office or proceed to the nearest ER for severe pain, fever (temp >100.4), wound drainage for more than 1 week, or any other concerning symptoms.