

Discharge Instructions: Lumbar 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 3rd day after leaving the hospital, as long as the wound is dry. If there is any drainage, wait to shower until the wound has been dry for 48 hours.
- 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 clothes. Gauze and tape or several Band-Aids may be used.
- 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.
- Observe the wound for signs of wound infection, including increasing redness, swelling, or persistent drainage around the incision site (longer than one week). It is normal for your wound to be warmer immediately after surgery (even up to 4-6 weeks out from surgery). If you begin to experience fevers, chills, night sweats or flu-like symptoms, or your wound shows signs concerning for wound infection, please call the Huntington Ortho office at (626) 795-0282.

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 muscle relaxer (Flexeril or cyclobenzaprine) may be taken 1-2 times daily as needed for muscle tightness and spasm.
- 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

- There are activity restrictions for 6 weeks after surgery: 1) No bending past 90 degrees. 2) No heavy lifting more than 10 lbs. 3) No twisting.
- Frequent walking is encouraged after surgery. Please avoid walking alone until you are confident that you will not fall. Please also avoid any activity that causes significant pain.
- Gentle physical therapy for stretching and strengthening may be started after your first post-op appointment.
- You may return to work when your pain is controlled and you are able to follow the above activity restrictions.

- You may return to driving when you are no longer taking opioid pain medication, your strength has returned, and your reaction time has returned to its pre-operative level. Most patients do not return to driving prior to their first post-operative visit.

Follow-up Visit

- The first follow up visit will usually be 2-4 weeks following surgery and you will receive an X-Ray at your visit.
- If you do not already have your follow up appointment with Dr. Johnson, please call the Huntington Ortho office for assistance: (626) 795-0282.

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.