

LUMBAR DISCECTOMY OR LAMINECTOMY POST OP INSTRUCTIONS

Immediately after surgery you will be transferred to the recovery unit. After appropriate recovery time you will transfer to the ambulatory unit. There you will be observed for a short while, then given the option to be discharged home. However, if you are experiencing nausea/vomiting, uncontrolled pain, difficulty urinating or if you prefer to stay overnight, you will be transferred to a hospital room. The following morning a nurse will see you and discharge you home if you are clinically stable.

After discharge if you experience any problems or complications related to your surgery that you do not consider life threatening, please call our office before going to the Emergency Room.

LIMITATIONS:

1. Do not drive for the first week post-op, and gradually increase driving time as needed after the first week. No trips with travel time longer than 1 hour for the first month post-op.
2. No lifting of more than 10 pounds and no frequent bending for the first month post-op.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Daily walking as comfort permits up to a quarter mile. After the first two weeks post-op, you may gradually increase walking distance as tolerated.
2. Stair climbing is permitted immediately.

WOUND CARE:

1. The incision is closed with sutures under the skin and steri strips or staples on the skin. The initial dressing is a gauze pad covered by tape. Remove the initial dressing at 48 hours post-op or sooner if it appears saturated with blood or fluid. It is not uncommon to have bloody drainage on the initial dressing. The drainage comes from small blood vessels in the subcutaneous or muscular layer under the incision and should resolve in 48 to 72 hours. It is not a concern in terms of volume of blood loss but it is important to change the dressings when saturated and clean around the margins of the incisions with alcohol or betadine to reduce the risk of secondary infection. Call the office if bloody drainage persists beyond 72 hours or if new drainage of any type develops in an initially dry incision.
2. After 48 hours you may cover the steri strips or staples with a Tegaderm when showering. Remove this Tegaderm after showering. You may stop using Tegaderms after 5 days and remove the steri strips at that time. Do not take tub baths for 2 weeks post-op. Stop using the Tegaderm if you see any signs of skin irritation or rash under the Tegaderm and notify our office. Staples should be removed in our office 5 to 10 days post-op.
3. The incision commonly becomes slightly swollen the first week and may remain so for several weeks. If your incision becomes progressively swollen, call the office.
4. Please call the office with any signs of infection such as redness or drainage with increased pain at the incision site, or fever greater than 101.5 degrees.
5. It is normal to have moderate back pain and stiffness following surgery for several weeks. It is also normal to have transient episodes of leg pain, particularly at night.