



Northwest Neurosurgical Associates, LLC

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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:

- 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. NO over-the-counter anti-inflammatory such as Advil (ibuprofen), Aleve (naproxen), or aspirin (91 mg baby aspirin is ok) for a minimum of 6 months; unless approved by your surgeon. 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.
- b. No lifting greater than 10 pounds.
- 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 except while in bed and during bathing.
- f. No driving for 2-3 weeks.
- 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.

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. Cover the incision during showering for 2 days following surgery.
- f. Remove steri-strips (if placed) after the 10th post-operative day. 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.

Additional instructions:

- a. If you have not already set up your post-operative appointment, please call the office when you get home to schedule your appointment. Your discharge paperwork should have instructions on it when you need to follow-up with your doctor's office.
- b. Medications are renewed only between the hours of 8:30 to 12:30 and 1:30pm-4:00pm, Monday thru Thursday, and 8:30am-12:30 on Friday. Please allow 2 business days for refill requests.
- c. No medications will be renewed during the weekends or after hours. No exceptions. Plan ahead.
- d. **NO SMOKING.** Studies have shown that smoking may inhibit fusion.
- e. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at 503-885-8845.