

# Lumbar Fusion Post-Operative Instructions

The following guidelines are recommended after spine surgery to ensure a good recovery. You may be given additional instructions by your surgeon when discharged. If you have any questions or problems please contact our office at (214) 351-8450.

## Activity

You may be up and about to take care of your personal needs but avoid any strenuous activity. Do not put yourself in a position where you could fall.

Do not lift more than 8 pounds (equivalent to about a gallon of milk). Avoid pushing or pulling activity.

Going up and down stairs is permissible. Be sure to use the handrails and take one step at a time until comfortable. Take precautions to prevent falls and use assistance if unsure. If you were given TED hose stockings you may discontinue once you are up and walking daily.

Avoid bending or twisting at the waist. Bend at your knees (squat) when picking up objects. Avoid sitting for longer than 45 minutes to one hour at a time. Sitting for longer periods of time may add to your discomfort. Take a 10 minute break to get up and move around or lie down before sitting again.

## Exercise

Walking is the best “exercise” after surgery and you need to walk DAILY. You should not engage in any other exercise until instructed by your physician. Gradually increase the distance you walk and, if weather permits, you may walk outside. You should be able to gradually increase your distance until you can walk about one mile within one to two months after surgery. Ladies avoid high heels for the first month after surgery.

## Brace

You will need to wear a brace at all times when you are up, for 3 months following surgery. You may remove the brace for brief periods to shower and attend to personal hygiene, but remember to maintain your back in a neutral position and avoid any bending. The brace does not need to be worn when getting up at night to use the restroom. Contact our office if your brace needs an adjustment.

## Incision Care

Keep the incision dry for 48 hours after surgery. You do not need to apply any ointment. You do not need to keep the incision covered unless there is drainage from the incision. Contact us if drainage persists for more than 2 days or if you have redness or swelling around the incision.

You will have steri-strips (small adhesive strips) over the incision. It is ideal for the steri-strips to stay in place for 10 days. Do not be concerned if the steri-strip edges roll up or fall off before then. After 10 days remove them.

If you have fevers or chills, take your temperature with a thermometer. If you have a temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or 38.3 degrees Celsius or higher, contact our office.

## Bathing

You may SHOWER and get the incision wet after 48 hours. Avoid scrubbing your incision site. Do NOT soak the incision; so avoid baths, hot tubs or swimming for 1 month after surgery. It is normal for the incision site to itch, but avoid scratching.

## Driving

Do not drive for the first two weeks. You may ride in an automobile for short distances as tolerated.

## Pain Medication

You will be given a prescription for pain medication when you are discharged from the hospital. You may take the pain medication with a snack or meal if stomach upset occurs. If you need a refill, have your pharmacy fax a refill request to our office at (214) 351-8451.

## Sexual Intercourse

Sexual intercourse may be resumed at any time as tolerated. Go slowly and avoid painful positions.

## Diet

Eat a healthy, well balanced diet and avoid extra calories. You may have a decreased appetite after surgery.

## Constipation

You may be constipated after your surgery, so increase your intake of fiber (fruits and vegetables) and fluid (unless instructed otherwise). You may use your choice of over-the-counter laxatives (such as Senokot S, Dulcolax, Colace, or Milk of Magnesia). If you do not have a bowel movement, use an over-the-counter enema (i.e. Fleets Enema) as indicated on the bottle. If you are still unable to have a bowel movement, or have nausea, vomiting or abdominal bloating, contact your family doctor for instructions.

## Smoking

You should not smoke after surgery, smoking decreases the rate of skin and bone healing. This can impact the success of your spine fusion. Smoking also interferes with the effectiveness of your pain medication. The hospital campuses are smoke-free and you will not be allowed to go outside to smoke. Contact your primary care physician for smoking cessation options prior to surgery if needed. It is most ideal if you are smoke free 2-4 weeks prior to your surgery date.

## Office Follow-up

You will need a post-operative appointment for an incision check and follow-up, 3 to 4 weeks after surgery. You will also be seen at 3 and 6 months after surgery.

Please call our office to schedule an appointment.

An appointment has been scheduled for you. See below for the date and time.

You will need x-rays before your follow-up appointment if you have had a fusion surgery. Our office will contact you with the date and time.

NOTE: If your surgery date changes, you will need to call the office to change your follow-up appointment.

## Post-Operative Appointment:

Main Office  
9080 Harry Hines Blvd, Ste 210  
Dallas, Texas 75235  
(214) 351-8450

Satellite Office  
10730 Nall Ave, Ste 200  
Overland Park, Kansas 66211  
(214) 351-8450

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

### Disability or Activity/Work Restriction Paperwork

If activity/work restriction paperwork needs to be addressed, please notify someone when you check in at your follow-up visit. Otherwise, please call the office at 214-351-8450, and allow at least a week for paperwork to be completed. If short-term disability paperwork needs to be addressed, please fax your form with your name, date of birth, and contact information to 214-351-8451. Please allow 5-10 business days.

**\*\*\* Save these instructions for reference after your surgery \*\*\***

**If you have any questions about your surgical procedure or post-operative management, call (214) 351-8450.**