

# Discharge Instructions for Cervical (Neck) Surgery

Dr. Sonjay Fonn, DO

Below are instructions to follow after surgery to help in the healing process. Your doctor or nurse may also give instructions specific to your type of surgery. If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse. Remember, the most important factor in your recovery is you.

## **Activity and Showering:**

You will be given a cervical collar, either soft or hard depending on the type of surgery. You will need to wear this at all times except to shower. You will need to wear this collar for 2 weeks unless instructed otherwise.

Inspect the skin under your collar daily for irritation. If present, contact your doctor's office.

You may take a shower the second day after surgery. Take the collar off when showering. Be careful not to tilt your head forward or backward while in the shower. Keep your head in a neutral position. Do not rub the incision or put soap on it. Simply let the water run over the incision, pat it dry and reapply a dressing. Once dressing is completed, reapply collar.

Avoid lifting anything heavier than 10 pounds (about a gallon of milk). Avoid any strenuous activity and any sudden or extreme head movements.

Do not drive until you are allowed to take your collar off. Be sure to wear your collar at all times when riding in a car. Always wear your seat belt in a car. It is important to protect your neck at all times.

You may resume sexual activity after surgery. As with all other activities, you should avoid any undue stress on your neck.

## **Work:**

Your doctor will decide when you are ready to return to work. This will depend on the type of work you do and type of surgery you had.

### **Incision Care:**

The dressing on your neck will have to be changed every day for 10 days. Keep the dressing clean and dry. A friend or family member will be shown how to change the dressing.

- Wash hands.
- Remove old dressing.
- Inspect for signs of infection.
- If steri-strips are present leave them on until they fall off. No betadine is needed with steri-strips.
- Apply new clean gauze dressing, and cover the entire dressing with tape.

### **Pain Medications:**

You will be given prescriptions for pain and muscle spasms prior to discharge.

You will need to call the office to get refills on pain medications. Call the office 3-4 days before you need your prescription refilled.

Expect your throat to be sore when you swallow. You may use Cepacol lozenges as needed. Warm liquids, such as broth, tea or coffee, will help ease this soreness.

Expect to have some soreness in your shoulders and mid-to-upper back; this is due to positioning while in surgery.

### **Over the Counter Pain (OTC) Medications:**

Do not take any OTC pain medications unless approved by Dr. Fonn, DO. Many pain medications already have Tylenol in them. Max 24 hour Tylenol dose is 4000 mg. Medications such as ASA, Ibuprofen, Aleve and Motrin can prevent bone fusion.

### **Smoking:**

If you smoke, please try to stop. Consult your primary care provider for methods on smoking cessation. Nicotine can restrict blood flow, therefore increasing your nonfusion rate by 40 percent.

### **Follow Up Appointments:**

A follow up appointment will be made in about a month, with X rays prior to discharge.

If staples are used at your incision site, a staple removal appointment will be made prior to discharge.

Call Dr. Fonn's Office at 573-651-1687 IF:

You have redness, swelling or drainage at the incision site or you have a temperature of 101 degrees F or greater.

If you experience choking or difficulty breathing, go to the nearest ER and have the staff contact Dr. Fonn, DO.

