

Discharge Instructions following Lumbar (Back) Surgery

Dr. Sonjay Fonn, DO

Below are instructions to follow before and after surgery to help in the healing process. Your doctor 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:

- Do not sit for long periods of time. Expect the sitting position to be the most uncomfortable position for you, because it puts more pressure on your back than any other position. There is no time to limit on how long you can sit. Let pain be your guide, and when you feel added soreness, stand, walk or lie down between periods of sitting.
- Do not lift more than 10 pounds (about a gallon of milk).
- Do not do any bending or twisting of your back.
- Be careful when you move, and limit high-risk activities that could cause a fall. Move slowly and logroll out of bed.
- If you were given a back brace, you will need to wear this at all times, except to shower, go to and from the restroom, and while lying in bed.
- You may shower the first day after surgery. Use plastic wrap and secure this with tape over the dressing. Ensure the dressing stays dry and change the dressing after you shower.

- Short car rides are okay. Riding in a car will not prevent your back from healing, but it will be uncomfortable. If you can only sit for 15 minutes without your soreness worsening, then limit your car rides to 15-30 minutes and plan a stop to get out and walk. The ride home will be difficult and uncomfortable, so you may need to plan additional stops.
- You may not drive until Dr. Fonn releases you to do so. When you can drive, use your mirrors so you will not twist your back. Be sure to wear your seat belt.
- If you have stairs at home, go slowly and use the handrail. There are no restrictions on stairs, but this would be considered a high risk activity; therefore, try to limit walking up and down stairs as much as possible.
- You may resume sexual activity after surgery; however, do not put additional stress on your back.
- Dr. Fonn will decide when you can return to work. The type of work you do as well as the type of surgery will determine when you can return to work.
- Drink plenty of water and eat more fiber, as the pain medications will cause constipation. You may use any over-the-counter laxative or stool softener desired.

Pain Medications:

It is suggested if you have a long ride home that you fill your prescriptions prior to leaving the Medical Center. This enables you to take a dose of pain medication during the ride or when you arrive home if a dose is due to be given.

Over-The-Counter (OTC) Pain Medications :

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

Smoking:

If you smoke, please try to stop. Contact your primary care doctor about smoking – cessation methods. Nicotine prevents blood flow. This can increase your nonfusion rate to 40 percent.

Medication Refills:

Medication refills can be obtained by calling Dr. Fonn's office. Please call 3-4 days prior to finishing your medications. Certain pain medications require a handwritten prescription and can not be called in. This means you will need to drive to Dr. Fonn's office or allow time for the prescription to come via mail.

Dressing and Incision Care:

The dressing change will be demonstrated to a family member prior to discharge.

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after dressing change.
- Remove old dressing.
- If staples are present, apply Betadine. No Betadine is needed if staples are not present.
- Cover incision with gauze.
- Reapply tape, covering the entire dressing and all edges with tape.
- If Steri-strips are present, let them fall off.
- Do the dressing for a total of 10 days or until staples are removed.

Follow-Up Appointments:

If staples are present, a staple removal appointment will be made prior to discharge.

A 1-month follow up appointment will be made for you prior to discharge. Depending on the type of surgery, an X-ray appointment may also be made.

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

- You have redness, worsening swelling or drainage at the incision
- You have a temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- There is increased numbness, weakness or pain in the hips, legs or feet
- You have questions or concerns

Follow Up Appointment: _____

Responsible Party

Discharge Nurse

