



Discharge Instructions for Cervical Fusions and Cervical Disc Replacements

1. Check incisions twice daily for the following: Green/yellow discharge, increased redness and/or tenderness at incision site, opening of the incision, flu-like symptoms, temperature above 101.5 *if any of the above should occur, please contact your physician's office.
2. Your bandages should be removed 24 to 36 hours after leaving the hospital, as long as there is no continued drainage from the wound.
3. It is normal to have a sore throat and some difficulty swallowing solid foods. This may persist for several days to weeks. Eating soft cold foods like yogurt, smoothies, milkshakes, applesauce, pudding, etc. should help until swallowing returns to normal.
4. You may sleep in any position which makes you comfortable. Many patients find comfort sleeping in a recliner chair. It is not abnormal to have difficulty sleeping for the first 2-3 weeks following your surgery. We recommend trying Benadryl or Tylenol PM (both are over the counter medications at the drugstore to assist with sleep if needed).
5. You may shower as normal once the bandages are removed from your incisions. If they are not removed before your discharge from the hospital, you may remove those 36-48 hours after leaving the hospital as long as there is no continued drainage from your wound. Hair washing is permissible while in the shower. Please refrain from using bathtubs, hot tubs or whirlpools until seen in the office and advised otherwise. It is recommended that a shower chair be used for the first few weeks to ensure your safety.
6. The incisions should be cleaned gently using regular soap and water. Do NOT use heavily perfumed soaps. RUB GENTLY or pat dry! Do NOT place any ointments or lotions over the incision.
7. You may NOT drive a car until told otherwise by your physician (usually at your second post op visit). You may be a passenger for short distances (20-30 minutes). If you must travel for a longer period, be sure to make several stops so that you can stretch your legs. Reclining the passenger seat will be the most comfortable position for you, especially if needing to travel for longer distances.
8. Do not initially sit in one position for periods longer than 20-30 minutes. You may increase this time as you become more comfortable.
9. **DO NOT DO THE FOLLOWING:**
 - Lift anything greater than 15-20 lbs (a gallon of milk in each hand is about 15 lbs).
 - Bend below the level of your knees, or twist at the waist.
10. DO walk as much as possible. Stairs are good for you, but take it slow and use the handrail. You may also use a treadmill. No running.

11. If your incisions have sutures or staples, they may be removed 2-3 weeks following your surgery at post op appointment with the doctor's office.

12. Do not take any type of anti-inflammatory medication for 10 weeks or until advised otherwise (i.e. Aspirin, Motrin, Aleve, Advil, Ibuprofen, Indocin, Celebrex, Vioxx, etc.). These medications inhibit the development of a solid fusion. Extra-Strength Tylenol is okay as are the dismissal pain medications given to you. Wean down to Extra-Strength Tylenol as soon as you are able.

13. **No smoking/chewing tobacco or any products containing nicotine including vapes!** These products drastically decrease the chance of a solid fusion and proper healing.

14. Call **208.732.0067** to make/ confirm an appointment with Dr. Christensen for approximately 1 week after your surgery date, or if there are any questions/concerns. On weekends and evenings, call Cassia Regional Hospital at 208.677.4444 or Madison Memorial Hospital at 208.359.6900 and ask for Dr. Christensen to be paged.

I HAVE RECEIVED AND UNDERSTAND THESE INSTRUCTIONS

Patient Signature: _____

Date: _____

Instructed by: _____

Date: _____