

Lumbar Fusion: Post-op Instructions

Brace: You need to wear your Lumbar support brace for another 4 weeks from today. In 3 and a half weeks, you may start weaning out of your brace – wearing it an hour less in the morning and an hour less at night, adding an hour each day, until you become “brace free”. By *six weeks after your surgery*, you should be completely weaned off of your brace.

Weight Restrictions: You are to continue abiding by your weight restrictions of no lifting more than 10 pounds [remember a gallon of milk is 8-9 pounds] and avoid excessive stressing of the lumbar spine.

Wound Care: At this time, you may start washing your incision[s] in the shower. Please use an anti-bacterial soap when washing your incision[s]. Do NOT use a scented soap as this will dry out your skin. Do not aggressively rub or scratch your incision[s]. Do NOT apply any lotions or creams to the incision [this include Antibacterial cream, Neosporin or any scar creams]. Also continue to avoid baths, hot tubs and pools for another 4-6 weeks.

Medications: We will continue to prescribe your pain medications for the next 6 weeks. Again, we would like to remind you that it is our strict pain management policy to only prescribe pain medications for 8 weeks [2 months] after your surgery. If your narcotic pain medication is too strong and you want to take something over the counter – you may only take Tylenol. Make sure to not take more than 4000mg of Tylenol daily. *After 8 weeks, you will need to have all pain medications managed by your primary care doctor or pain management doctor.*

NSAIDS [Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs]: NSAIDS are – Motrin, Advil, Naproxen, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Celebrex, and Mobic. Continue to avoid these for the next 4 weeks. After 4 weeks you may resume your NSAID use if you choose to do so.

Activity: You should be walking every day; gradually increasing your activity daily.

Driving: In 4 weeks, you may resume driving as long as you are NOT taking pain medications and have weaned out of your brace.

Smoking: NO SMOKING!!! No smoking now or for 2 years after surgery [we prefer you never resume smoking]. *The risk of pseudoarthrosis [non-union of fusion requiring possible revision surgery] is significantly higher in patients who smoke. Furthermore, complications such as problems with wound healing and infection are also increased in smokers. Please do not smoke as we want you to heal from your surgery and avoid further surgery in the future.*

Bone growth stimulator: If you were given a bone growth stimulator during today’s visit, make sure you are wearing it daily as directed. The bone growth stimulator helps to stimulate the cells to produce bone to fuse your spacers and discs together. If you have any issues with your bone growth stimulator – contact Southern Cross Medical Supply at 585-334-5530.

****PLEASE CALL**** with the following: fevers, chills, difficulty with urination or bowel movements [despite trying laxatives, suppositories or enemas], persistent nausea/vomiting, upper extremity weakness, any significant redness or drainage from incision or any other symptoms that concern you.