

# Rochester Brain and Spine

Dr Seth Zeidman

Emily Lapp PA-C Nathaniel Brochu PA-C Elizabeth Jefferson PA-C Cynthia Larson PA-C

400 Red Creek Drive, Suite 120; Rochester NY 14623

(585) 334-5560

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## Discharge Instructions – Lumbar Fusion

- **Medication:** You may be prescribed a narcotic pain medication as well as a muscle relaxant. Take these on an as-needed basis. Prescriptions for both pain medications and muscle relaxants will be provided to you for up to 8 weeks after 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. If you need a refill of either medication, please call the office when you have 5 days or less of your medication left for a refill. *After 8 weeks, you will need to have all pain medications managed by your primary care doctor or pain management doctor.*

Do NOT use aspirin, NSAIDS [Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory - Motrin, Advil, Naproxen, Ibuprofen, Aleve, Celebrex, and Mobic] or any other blood thinning medication without approval from our office (or as directed in the hospital prior to discharge) within the first 6 weeks after surgery. After 6 weeks from the date of your surgery, you may resume taking these medications.

- **Activity/Restrictions:** Wear the brace at all times [except in the shower or sleeping], even when sitting in a chair for 6 weeks after surgery. A cotton t-shirt is most comfortable worn under the brace in the first few weeks after surgery. If you have any issues with your brace – contact Southern Cross Medical Supply at 585-334-5530.

**Do not lift more than 10 pounds.** A gallon of milk is 8-9 pounds. You are to avoid strenuous activity. You should walk daily, gradually increasing the time as distance as tolerated. Do not stay in any position for longer than 2 hours during the day, either laying or sitting. This will contribute to your back stiffness and pain. You may walk up a few steps to get in and out of your home only for the first 2 weeks. Flights of stairs are permitted after 2 weeks.

You may begin to drive 6-8 weeks after surgery **ONLY** if you are no longer taking any pain medication and have weaned out of the brace.

- **Wound Care:** You may remove the dressing over your incision(s) the day after you get home and leave the incision open to air. Keep the wound as dry as possible. You may also shower the day after you get home as well. Make sure to cover your incision(s) when in the shower [we recommend covering your incision(s) with Saran wrap and paper/silk tape] for the first week. You will have steri-strips [pieces of tape] over your incision(s). These will fall off on their own – about 10-14 days after surgery. Do NOT apply any lotions or creams to the incision [this includes Antibacterial cream, Neosporin or any scar creams]. No tub baths, pools or hot tubs until the incision(s) are well-healed [about 6-8 weeks].
- **General:** Make sure to drink plenty of fluids and use a stool softener after surgery. We recommend that you start taking Colace 100mg twice a day starting 5 days before your surgery and then increasing the Colace to 200mg twice a day after surgery. If you start to have diarrhea – contact the office and we will adjust the dose of the Colace.

\*For any dental cleanings/procedures or any invasive procedures: You will need to be pre-medicated with antibiotics for 1 year after surgery. \*

Please call the office if you develop any of the following symptoms: fevers, chills, difficulty with urination or bowel movements [despite medications], persistent nausea or vomiting, severe pain not relieved with pain medications [some pain is to be expected], any redness or drainage from the incision. REMEMBER – NO SMOKING! It inhibits bone fusion and healing. Do not undo all of your hard work at recovery.