



**Jason Taub, M.D.**

### **Minimally Invasive Lumbar Fusion Surgery: Post-Operative Instructions**

#### **Incision Care**

- Usually, your stitches are beneath the surface of the skin. They will be absorbed into your body as you heal. They may be reinforced with steri-strips (sterile strips of tape) applied directly to the skin surface.
- Without Steri-strips, the dressing is a clear adhesive. It should start to peel off in a week or two.
- You may shower, but no tub baths, starting 3 days after surgery.
- You must keep your incision(s) dry for 2 days following your surgery.
- Steri-strips will come off on their own. Otherwise, will be removed at 1<sup>st</sup> post-op visit in 2 weeks.

#### **Pain**

You may still have some pain, numbness or tingling in your neck or arm(s). This should decrease gradually as the nerves heal. An ice pack may be used on the incision to reduce swelling and pain.

#### **Brace Instructions**

- You must wear your brace at all times when out of bed, if given a brace. Wear brace with activities and car rides. Do not need to wear when sleeping or sitting. No big bending out of brace.
- You must take it off the shower.
- Your physician will determine when you are ready to wean out of your brace, but you are usually wearing the brace for 8 to 12 weeks.

#### **Call Our Office**

If you ...

- Feel severe pain, weakness or numbness in your leg(s).
- Notice excessive swelling or increased redness around your incision.
- If bloody drainage requires 2 or more bandage changes in a single day.
- If any clear fluid drainage comes from the wound.
- Have a fever of 101°F or greater.
- Have a new problem controlling your bladder or bowel.

#### **Medication**

- If you were given a Medrol Dosepak (steroid/ anti-inflammatory medication) you may notice a slight increase in the above symptoms, as the Medrol Dosepak decreases. This is due to swelling and irritation around the nerve and will improve as you heal. Complete the full course of Medrol according to the instructions in the package. Common side effects of steroids may include, but are not limited to, GI upset, insomnia and anxiety.
- You will be given a prescription for pain medicine when you are discharged from the hospital. Take as directed on the prescription. **Do not drive, operate machinery or drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication.**



**Krishna Satyan, M.D.**

**Minimally Invasive Lumbar Fusion Surgery: Post-Operative Instructions (cont.)**

- You may have been given a prescription for muscle relaxants (to reduce spasms or tightness in your back). This medication may make you drowsy. **Do not drive, operate machinery or drink alcoholic beverages while taking this medication.**
- Medications will be refilled during normal business hours (8:30 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Thursday and 8:30 am – 12:30 pm Friday) as the physician on call cannot renew prescriptions.

**Activity**

**First Week:**

- No driving until cleared in office.
- Avoid bending or twisting from the waist.
- No lifting > 10-20 lbs or big bending of neck for 3 months.
- Ambulate as much as tolerated.
- Limit auto travel. Passenger only. No driving.
- Avoid house and yard work. You may cook but do not lift more than 10-20 pounds until released to do so.
- To sleep you may lie on your back or side, but not on your abdomen.
- You may shower but no tub baths. Pat the incision dry, do not rub.
- You may shampoo your hair in the shower only. Do not lean over the sink to shampoo. Hold your head in a neutral position.
- Do not cradle the phone between your cheek and shoulder.
- May be fatigued for first few weeks. Rest/nap as needed.

**Second Week:**

- Increase walking distance as tolerated, working up to 1 mile per day.
- Continue bending, twisting and lifting restrictions.

**Third Week:**

- Increase walking distance as tolerated.
- You may be up and about as tolerated.
- Begin light housework. Do not sweep or vacuum. Stop for frequent breaks. Use good body mechanics.
- Continue bending, twisting and lifting restrictions.

**Follow- Up Appointment**

Your first post-op appointment should be 2 weeks from your surgery for skin staple removal. Please call early to get a convenient appointment time. Your next appointment will be 4 weeks later. You will be scheduled for an x-ray prior to your 6-week appointment.

**Return to Work** Return to work varies with the type of occupation and will be discussed at your follow-up appointment.