



# PREMIER

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## SPINE CARE

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### IMPORTANT HOME DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING LUMBAR SPINAL SURGERY

- Avoid frequent bending and lifting activities. Squat if you need to reach down.
- Objects should be held against the body and weights greater than a gallon of milk should be avoided until instructed by your surgeon.
- **DO NOT BECOME SEDENTARY.** Walking is the safest form of exercise to maintain your back and trunk strength. We recommend you increase your ambulation as tolerated. Do not lift weights and do not perform stretches, sit-ups, or leg lifts.
- Do NOT operate a motor vehicle while on narcotic pain medication. Driving activities may be resumed when you feel safe and comfortable enough to drive or should await evaluation in the office following surgery.
- Going up and down stairs is allowed but should be performed slowly, climbing one step at a time, with a handrail present.
- Avoid prolonged upright sitting as this may aggravate post-operative pain. Stand, walk, or change positions as needed.
- Stay on a regular schedule. Try to avoid napping so as not to impair a full night's sleep.
- **AVOID NICOTINE PRODUCTS (CIGARETTES, GUMS, PATCHES, AND SMOKELESS TOBACCO) AS THESE HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO NEGATIVELY AFFECT WOUND AND BONE FUSION HEALING.**
- The surgical dressing should be changed once a day as instructed in the hospital and redressed until the dressing is completely dry. The dressing should consist of dry gauze pads with tape at the upper and lower margins of the incision.
- Some drainage may continue from the wound until the deep tissues heal and this is a normal finding. This is typically for the first 4-5 days.
- **If there is continued drainage after 7 days, increasing redness about the incision, or if pus is evident, please notify the office and staff immediately so this may be evaluated.**
- If steri-strips are in place, leave them on until your first post-operative office follow-up (usually 3 weeks after surgery). If staples are present, these will be removed on your first post-operative visit (usually 2 weeks after surgery).
- Showering ONLY is allowed once the wound and dressing are completely free of any drainage. Do not take baths, go swimming in pools, lakes, or use hot tubs for 6 weeks after surgery or until instructed by your surgeon.
- Burning, itching, numbness, and swelling are common along the incision area. These sensations will gradually improve as healing continues.
- Occasional twinges of pain, numbness, and/or tingling are common after back surgery. These may run down the legs or be associated with a dull ache. These represent part of the healing process and should lessen with time.
- **Remember to always call the office if experiencing fever (temperatures >101.5°F), prolonged wound redness/drainage, bladder and bowel difficulties, or other neurologic changes.**