

## **Cleveland Clinic Center for Spine Health Spine Surgery Pre-/Post-Op Instruction Sheet**

### **PREPARING FOR SURGERY**

#### **Assistance with travel/lodging**

Please contact the Medical Concierge for assistance with travel/lodging (216.445.5580, or toll-free at 1.800.223.2273, extension 55580).

#### **Healthquest and scheduling of pre-operative appointments**

Healthquest is an anesthesia medical questionnaire that all surgical patients must complete. The questionnaire will help determine what appointments you need before surgery.

Once the HealthQuest questionnaire is completed, your surgeon's office will officially schedule your surgery. The surgery scheduling office will contact you directly with your pre-operative appointment dates and times.

We are not permitted to have patients complete their pre-operative appointments outside of the Cleveland Clinic Health System.

#### **Medications to discontinue**

If you are taking any blood-thinning medications, please discuss the discontinuation of these medications with your surgical team at least 2 weeks before your surgical date.

#### **Surgery scheduling**

Your scheduled surgery date is based on the availability of the operating room and the surgeon. However, because of the nature of spine surgery, there may be occasions when an emergency case may need to replace a scheduled elective case. We apologize in advance for any difficulties this may cause. We will try our best to re-schedule your case as soon as possible.

### **THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY**

#### **Surgery time**

Please contact the surgery scheduling office after 2:30 p.m. the day before your surgery to learn what time you should arrive. (Neurosurgery Scheduling Office: 216.444.9292; toll-free: 1.800.223.2273, extension 49292).

Please report to Desk P-20 at the assigned arrival time.

## **Hibiclens Shower Gel/skin prep wipes/staph testing**

Please shower the night before surgery with the Hibiclens Shower Gel you received during your pre-op education appointment. On the morning of surgery, please use the skin prep wipes, as instructed.

If the nasal swab performed during your patient education was positive, you will need to use the Bactroban nasal ointment as directed.

## **Eating/drinking**

**YOU SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO EAT OR DRINK AFTER MIDNIGHT THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR SURGERY.**

If you are taking medications on the morning of surgery, please take them with a small sip of water.

## **THE DAY OF SURGERY**

Please wear comfortable clothing. Bring toiletries that would help make your stay comfortable.

Please bring an updated medication list on the day of your surgery.

Please leave valuables (jewelry, money, etc.) at home or give them to a friend or family member before you check in at the hospital.

Please refer to your Surgical Guide Book for other recommendations.

## **POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS**

When you wake up from surgery, you will have stockings around the bottom of your legs. These help prevent a blood clot from forming. They can be hot, noisy, and inconvenient. However, they are very important to help reduce your risk of developing a blood clot. Please keep them on.

Walking is the best form of exercise after surgery and is an important factor in reducing your risk of a blood clot.

If you develop any changes in leg tenderness and/or swelling of the calf, please contact your surgeon's office right away.

## **Medication refills**

Most patients will be discharged with a pain medication prescription to help relieve post-surgical pain.

If warranted, prescription refill authorizations are made by your surgery team. Please note that not all surgical teams refill pain medications.

It is your responsibility to discuss pain medication refills and expectations with your surgical team before your surgery.

According to the new laws regarding pain medications, refills will require a written prescription and may no longer be phoned into pharmacies.

**Please note:** for those providers who refill pain medications, offices will require 3 business days to process prescription refills. No refills will be processed on Fridays.

If your medications are not controlling your post-operative pain, please contact your surgeon's office to discuss treatment options. If there are issues managing your pain after your surgery, you may be asked to see a pain specialist.

### **Suture removal and wound care**

Your incision may be closed with absorbable sutures, staples, Steri-strips, or skin glue. Cleveland Clinic Home Care may be consulted to follow up on wound care and remove any sutures or staples.

Inspect the incision and change the dressing every day. Once there is no drainage, the wound can be left open to air without a dressing.

**Call your surgeon's office immediately if any of the following occurs: increased redness, swelling, pain, drainage, opening of the incision area, or if you have fever/chills.**

Please remember that it may take some time for numbness or pain to improve after cervical or lumbar spine surgery. Due to the healing process, it is not unusual to have some pain in the surgical area for weeks after surgery.

If your post-op pain is worse than before surgery, please notify your surgeon's office.

### **Post-Op Restrictions--Cervical Surgery**

- If you were prescribed a cervical collar to wear after your procedure, please wear the collar before you are discharged.
- Most collars may be removed to take a shower or when you are eating. Your surgeon will tell you if you can remove your collar for these purposes.
- Try not to move your neck too much. It's especially important not to flex or stretch your neck.
- Please do not do any strenuous activities, including heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling.
- Climb stairs based on your comfort level.
- If you have questions about post-op activities, please contact your surgical team.

### **Post-Op Restrictions--Lumbar Surgery**

- Limit bending, lifting, and twisting for up to 6 weeks after surgery.
- Do not sit for a long period of time (no more than 30-40 minutes at a time).
- Take frequent short walks every day, gradually increasing your distance every day.
- Climb stairs based on your comfort level.

### **Post-Op Restrictions--Kyphoplasty/Vertebroplasty**

- Resume activities of daily living as tolerated.
- You can drive and return to work when you are able and can tolerate it.
- Climb stairs based on your comfort level.

## Returning to driving

You will usually be permitted to drive 2 weeks after surgery, and when you are no longer taking pain medications.

## Returning to work

You should contact your surgical team to discuss when you will be able to return to work.

The surgical office will complete the Family Medical Leave Act/Short-Term Disability paperwork. Please note there is a 5-7 day turnaround time. Please provide specific directions as to where the paperwork should be sent.

The surgical offices are responsible for short-term disability up to 12 weeks after surgery. Any additional time off will need to be determined by your primary care physician or referring provider.

## Miscellaneous reminders

If you had cervical or lumbar fusion surgery, you should not take non-steroidal medications such as ibuprofen, Aleve, Naprosyn, Motrin, Advil, etc., until your surgeon tells you. In most cases, these medications can be resumed 12 weeks after surgery.

If you did not have a cervical or lumbar fusion, you may resume the above medications approximately 10 days after surgery.

Your need for pain medications will decrease over time.

*This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your doctor or health care provider. Please consult your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition.*



### Center for Spine Health

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Appointments: 216.363.5860

[http://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/neurological\\_institute/spine](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/neurological_institute/spine)

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