

CERVICAL FUSION POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

A patient undergoing cervical fusion surgery may remain in the hospital or extended care facility for 1 - 2 days, but length of stay is individualized. If your surgery is performed at the Surgery Center, expect to stay overnight.

You are required to remain upright, preferably at a 90 degree angle for the first 14 days following neck surgery. This helps to prevent swelling at the incision site, which may effect your ability to swallow and breath. It is strongly recommended that you obtain a recliner to sleep in during that time to ensure compliance with this important restriction.

Patient's should stop smoking and are advised that tobacco in any form can prevent the success of surgery resulting in a complication.

Wound Care

- Change your dressing once a day in the morning, that way if there are any problems they can be addressed. Take old dressing off, swab with betadine, let it dry and replace with new dressing. Do not use the hibiclens provided before surgery on your wound.
- Please DO NOT put any ointments or antimicrobial solutions over the incision
- A drain will likely be placed during the procedure and you may be discharged with this drain in place.
- **If you notice drainage, significant redness, swelling or increased pain at the incision site, please call Jennifer at 314-368-0409 or Lori at 314-249-4578.**

Medications

- If your discharge medications are delivered by SSM Express Pharmacy to the hospital or Surgery Center prior to discharge, you may be required to provide the copayments for your medications at that time.
- You may receive a steroid taper that must be completed. In some cases a second steroid prescription will be needed. Please monitor you speech and swallow function.
- You will be provided one prescription for narcotics and muscle relaxers with discharge. Any additional pain medications may be obtained through pain management.

Showering

- You may take a shower 3 days AFTER surgery, if you do not have a drain in place.
- There is no need to cover the incision after the first 7 days.
- You may use soap and water to clean the incision. Gently dry off the incision, then leave it open to air. DO NOT use the remaining hibiclens to clean the incision
- Please make sure the incision is completely dry after showering.

- DO NOT take a bath or get into a pool or lake for TWO WEEKS after surgery.

Skin Abrasions From the Brace

- If you experience skin irritation from the brace rubbing your skin, contact Dr. Taylor's office immediately.
- DO NOT apply the talc powder to open areas of skin.
- You may apply a scarf or handkerchief between the area of skin and the brace to prevent irritation.

Activities

- You may walk all that you would like to do over the next six weeks while you are recovering.
- You may raise your arms to brush or wash your hair.
- You may ride in a car as much as you are comfortable.

CAUTION: Operating a motor vehicle may be limited due to your inability to adequately turn your head from side to side. No one should operate a motor vehicle while taking narcotics, or wearing a cervical collar. DO NOT RISK THE LIVES OF OTHERS!

Restrictions

You are required to remain upright, preferably at a 90 degree angle for the first 14 days following neck surgery. It is strongly recommended that you obtain a recliner to sleep in during that time to ensure compliance with this important restriction.

- No athletic activities until you have discussed your limitations with Dr. Taylor at your six week follow-up appointment.
- No lifting more than a total of 5 pounds until after discussing with Dr. Taylor at your six week follow-up appointment.
- No overhead activities.
- No pulling or pushing with your arms.
- You will be provided the necessary collars required after surgery and you will be instructed when and how to use them.

DO NOT take anti-inflammatories (Advil, Ibuprofen, Excedrin Migraine) until cleared with Dr. Taylor.

Dr. Taylor's staff will be very specific regarding any restart dates for Plavix or Coumadin.

Wear your Bone Growth Stimulator 4 hours everyday once instructed by Dr. Taylor's staff. Bring your stimulator to every appointment with Dr. Taylor. **If you do not receive a Bone Growth Stimulator within 10 days of surgery, it is your responsibility to contact Jennifer or Lori to obtain one.**

Follow-up appointment:

- You are required to present to the office for all scheduled post-operative appointments. We will attempt to accommodate you regarding days and times, but realize that wound care may dictate appointments with only a days notice.
- If no appointment has been scheduled for your follow-up five days after discharge, please call 314-249-4578 (Lori).

Questions

- For any post-operative questions please call Dr. Taylor's nurse, Lori, at 314-249-4578 or PA, Jennifer, at 314-368-0409.

Emergencies

- During business hours (Monday through Friday 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M., except for holidays) call 314-336-2555. Ask to speak with Dr. Taylor's nurse. Dr. Taylor's nurse reports all emergencies to Dr. Taylor.
- After business hours you may call the Emergency Exchange at 314-995-0891. The operator on call will contact Dr. Taylor. If Dr. Taylor is out of town, another physician will return your call.

Please call with any questions or concerns. We will be glad to assist you in any way during your recovery period.

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