



Mark Robinson, MD
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POST-OPERATIVE CARE OF CERVICAL SPINAL FUSION

Follow-Up Appointment: We would like to see you back in our office in 2-3 weeks after surgery.

Your Follow Up appointment is scheduled with Cole Nielsen, PA-C for:

Cervical Collar: **If you are given a collar, you must wear the collar at all times, 24 hours a day**, unless you have been instructed otherwise. This collar acts as a cast/splint for your neck. It will help limit the movement of the bones and allow them to heal. Excessive movement can result in non-fusion of the vertebral bones, which could require additional time in the collar or even additional surgery. You should not drive while wearing the collar. Do not discontinue use of the collar unless consulting with our office first. You may remove the collar to shower.

Activity: We advise to take it easy the first 2 weeks after surgery. Take short, leisurely walks for exercise. Please slowly increase your activity level day to day as you are able. Do not stay in bed or lay down for the entire time. It is important to be up approximately 5 min every hour you are awake. **DO NOT LIFT MORE THAN 10LBS FOR THE FIRST 4-6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY.** Depending on job requirements you may be able to return to work with/in one to two weeks of surgery on a part time basis. Please ask us about your particular situation.

Pain Medicine: You will be given prescription pain medication to take at home. Pain levels can vary. Please try Extra-Strength Tylenol (acetaminophen) first to control pain. If this does not relieve the pain, then use the prescribed medications. This medication may not completely stop all of your pain, but should reduce it so you may sleep at night and perform daily activities. Take medications with food. We recommend you take a stool softener or laxative (ie. Mira-lax) while using opioid pain medications as they can commonly cause constipation. **DO NOT EXCEED** more than 4000 mg of Tylenol (acetaminophen) per day. Please avoid NSAID use for up to 3 months after the surgery. **Pain medications cause drowsiness, therefore we advise you do not drive while taking prescription pain medications.**



Wound Care: You may shower the day after surgery. It is okay to get incision wet, wash with mild soap and pat dry. Do not submerge the incision, Do not scrub the incision vigorously. You will have paper tape (steri-strips) or glue (dermabond) over the incision, these will gradually loosen and come off on their own. **All sutures are absorbable and do not need to be removed. Do not cover the incision site with new dressing or apply any ointments/creams to the incision site for at least 4 weeks after surgery.** Some swelling and redness around the incision is expected. You may apply an ice pack for 15-20 minutes several times a day for pain and swelling control. It may feel like you have a lump in your throat when you swallow, have a hoarse voice, and mild pain with swallowing. It may help to consume soft and/or cool food such as Jell-O for a couple days. If you are unable to swallow anything at all, please notify our office immediately. **If at any time you have extreme difficulty with breathing, call 911 immediately and let our office know as soon as possible. If you notice increasing redness, tenderness, swelling, purulent (pus) discharge at your incision site, or develop a fever/chills please contact our office immediately.**

Please do not hesitate to call our office with additional questions or concerns regarding your surgery and post-operative care