

Capital Neurological Surgeons

General Cervical Fusion Post-Operative Instructions And Homecare Guide

These are general instructions. Each doctor will discuss with you his own preferences and specific instructions for your particular surgery. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the office.

- Wear your collar at all times!
- Call the office as soon as you get home to schedule your post-op appointment in about a month. After coming home from the hospital, you ***may not ride in a car*** until your first post-operative visit to the doctor about one month after surgery.
- You may have paper tapes over your incision. These will fall off slowly or may be removed two weeks after discharge from the hospital. Or you may have a special surgical glue closing your incision. This will come off in about ten days.
- You may use the bathtub for bathing after hospital discharge, as instructed by your doctor. Remember to cover any hip incision area with plastic and keep incision(s) dry for 4 weeks after surgery.
- Pain medication and any other prescriptions will be given to you at discharge from the hospital. If you need refills, please be sure to contact your pharmacy during regular office hours Monday through Thursday at least two days before you will run out. No refills will be given on weekends or holidays.
- You may begin taking short walks inside the house the first week home, gradually increasing to outside walks during the second week and slowly building the time you spend walking. No other exercise is recommended at this time and certainly no house or yard work!

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Sleeping

- Lie on your back with your head and neck supported for comfort by a flat pillow or folded towel

- Alternative positions: Sleep on your side or use a recliner chair. Adjust pillow placement to ensure correct posture.

Sitting

- Use a recliner or high back chair. *Avoid slouched posture* at all times.
- Support arms with pillow(s) on lap to reduce tension on neck and shoulders.
- Use slant board for writing and reading.
- Pillow support behind lower back to assist in proper posture

HYGIENE

To wash your neck, lie down in bed or stand in front of a mirror (as directed by your physician) and remove the front part of the collar. The front of your neck and the collar may then be wiped off with a clean, moist washcloth, being careful to stay away from the incision. The incisions over the neck and hip may be cleaned with hydrogen peroxide as directed by your physician. Baby powder or cornstarch may then be used on your skin, avoiding the incision. You may wash and powder several times a day for comfort.

If you must wash your hair, a no-rinse shampoo is the easiest. Alternately, you can have a helper place plastic over the edge of your bed and a large basin on the floor. Lie on your back with your neck brace supported by the edge of the bed and have your helper wash and rinse gently.

WALKING

- Week 0-1 Begin by taking short walks inside the house the first week at home.
- Week 1-2 Gradually increase to outside walks. No other exercise is recommended at this time.
- Week 3-4 Gradually increase time and outdoor walking distance as is tolerated

TRANSPORTATION

After coming home from the hospital **you may not ride in or drive a car** until your first post-operative visit to the doctor one month after your surgery.

PRECAUTIONS

- No lifting or pushing greater than 8 pounds.
- Do not carry a purse. Use a fanny pack instead.
- Do not wear pullover clothing.
- Do not reach above shoulder height when sitting or standing.
- Do not walk an animal on a leash.

SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

- To avoid muscle strain/fatigue, take a load off your healing neck by lying down 10 minutes per hour.
- Follow physician instructions regarding medications.
- Use heat or ice packs to your upper back and shoulders for symptom relief.

Ice pack recipe: ½ Cup rubbing alcohol
 1 Cup water

Put in a zip-lock bag and put in freezer - will form an ice slush.

To use, place in a damp towel and apply in 10-15 minute intervals.

CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN IF:

Unexplained fever, increased redness, swelling or increased drainage from the incision site occurs.