



## Lumbar Discectomy

### Post-operative Instructions

Successful surgery depends not only on the success of the procedure, but also on your cooperation and compliance during the post-operative period. To assist you in this process, below are instructions and guidelines to follow during your recovery period. Our staff is here to assist all your post-operative needs. If you have any questions or problems please contact our office at (850) 934-7545.

#### Wound

Proper care of the incision helps to prevent infection.

- ❖ You will have skin glue and a proxy strip covering the incision site. It will come off on its own within 3 to 4 weeks after surgery. The small paper tapes on your incision will be removed in the office at your post-op visit or will be allowed to fall off themselves.
- ❖ Keep the incision dry for 48 hours after surgery.
- ❖ You may SHOWER and get the incision wet after 48 hours. Avoid scrubbing your incision site. Do NOT soak the incision; avoid baths, hot tubs and swimming for 1 month after surgery.
- ❖ Do not wash directly over the incision. Wash around the incision gently with soap and water and then let air dry.
- ❖ If you have fevers or chills, take your temperature with a thermometer. If you have a temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher for more than 4 hours, contact our office.
- ❖ Check the incision daily for redness, swelling or drainage. Some redness and swelling is normal. It is normal for the incision site to itch, but avoid scratching.
- ❖ A small amount of clear or slightly blood tinged drainage from the incision is normal. Contact us if drainage persists for more than 2 days or if you have redness or swelling around the incision.
- ❖ Do not use any creams, lotions, ointments, or alcohol near or on the incision.
- ❖ It is normal for the incision site to itch, but avoid scratching.

#### Pain Relief

During the healing phase, it is common to have some pain, numbness, tingling, and weakness in your back and legs. It generally takes nerves longer to heal, so your numbness and tingling may take weeks to months to fully resolve. If you have an increase in pain once you return home, try these options to decrease the pain.

- ❖ Ice the back for 15-20 minutes each hour for 4 hours. Do not put the ice directly on the skin. Use a pre-made ice pack or put ice in a plastic bag then wrap the ice pack or bag in a towel before you use it.
- ❖ Reduce your activity for the next 24 hours (i.e. walking).
- ❖ You will be discharged with prescription medication for your surgical pain. All refills on prescriptions must be picked up in our office. We require a 72 hour notice Monday thru Friday for a refill to be processed.
- ❖ Remember, **ABSOLUTELY NO MEDICATION REFILLS WILL BE PROCESSED ON THE WEEKEND.** Please plan accordingly.
- ❖ Tylenol (acetaminophen): You may take up to 4000 milligrams per day. Percocet and Norco also contain Tylenol. If you have liver disease, do not take Tylenol without checking with us first.
- ❖ Do not take Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (i.e., Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Celebrex, etc.) until directed by your healthcare provider.

The clinical staff will be working with you to balance pain medicine, pain management, and activity. The goal is to taper you off of your pain medicine by 6 weeks after surgery.

#### Exercise

- ❖ Walking is the best "exercise" after surgery and you need to walk DAILY. Gradually increase the distance you walk until you can walk about one mile within one month after surgery.
- ❖ Do not lift more than 10lbs for the first 4 weeks after surgery.
- ❖ No bending or twisting at the waist during the first 4 weeks after surgery.
- ❖ A "special" mattress is not required after surgery. You should avoid sleeping on a waterbed -it does not provide appropriate spine support.

#### Smoking

**DO NOT SMOKE.** This increases the chance that your bone will not heal properly. Smoking decreases the rate of skin and bone healing. Smoking also interferes with the effectiveness of your pain medication. This can impact the success of your Lumbar Discectomy.

#### Constipation

The combination of surgery, narcotic pain medicine, decreased activity level, and a change in your diet, can play a role in getting constipated. After surgery, it is common to have a problem with your bowels. Increasing your fiber intake, mobility, and taking a stool softener will help.

#### Future Clinic Visits

The office will help you schedule your first clinic visit in 4 weeks.

#### When to call the office

- ❖ Excessive redness, swelling, or drainage at the incision site, particularly swelling around the back incision. Contact us if drainage persists for more than 2 days. Be prepared to describe what the drainage looks like, how it smells, and how much there is.
- ❖ If you have a temperature of 100.5 degrees or higher lasting longer than 4 hours.
- ❖ Loss of bladder or bowel control
- ❖ Redness, warmth, or tenderness in the back of the calf of your leg(s)
- ❖ A persistent headache that is different when sitting

#### Phone Numbers

If you have questions or concerns, please call **Neuromicrospine at (850) 934-7545.**