



**POSTOP CARE  
AFTER**

***POSTERIOR  
LUMBAR FUSION  
SURGERY***

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**WOUND**

- **You can shower but keep the back dry (i.e. not soaking); do not swim or take a bath for 3 months after surgery**
- Do not put any creams on the wound
- For the first week after surgery, after every shower, pat the wound dry

**EXERCISES**

- The best exercise is walking. Small amounts frequently are best
- Do not overdo it! Walk only
- Follow the guidelines given to you by the physical therapist in hospital

**POSTURE**

- Try and keep the back straight
- **Don't bend, lift or twist**
- Avoid sitting for over an hour without taking a break
- Keep mobile- change positions frequently
- **Keep the brace on every time you get out of bed for 3 months**

**DRIVING**

- Do not drive for at least 6 weeks after surgery
- If you must be a passenger in the car, recline the seat and travel short distances only for the first month
- When driving take a 15 minute break for every 45 minutes of driving

**RETURN TO WORK**

- You can return to a desk job 4 weeks after surgery.
- Don't sit for prolonged periods of time.
- See your neurosurgeon before returning to a physical occupation

**PAIN RELIEF**

- Tylenol (#1, 2 or 3), Percocet or Vicodin can be taken for wound pain after surgery
- Robaxin or Flexeril is used for muscle spasm
- Numbness is very slow to recover and there may always be some residual numbness
- Pins and needles are not uncommon after surgery but should settle over time
- **Do not take any anti-inflammatories (e.g. Voltaren, Mobic etc.) for 3 months after surgery or the fusion will fail**

**FOLLOW-UP**

- **You need to see your neurosurgeon or his PA 2 weeks after surgery**
- **You will need some normal x-rays of your neck at 6 weeks (AP/lat L-spine) and some bending ones at 3 months.**

**WHAT TO WATCH FOR**

- If the wound becomes excessively red, swollen or painful or develops a discharge, or you have questions, contact your neurosurgeon at his office or go to the ER
- If it is an emergency and you cannot contact anyone come to the Emergency Room
- **DO NOT SMOKE OR THE FUSION WILL FAIL**
- **Constipation on pain pills is common- take fiber or over the counter stool softeners/laxatives. Your pharmacist can guide you**