



POSTOP CARE AFTER

POSTERIOR CERVICAL FUSION SURGERY

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WOUND

- There are typically dissolving sutures in the neck and no removal is required. Any paper tapes on the wound will fall off in the shower
- **You can shower but keep the neck dry (i.e. not soaking) and do not swim for at least 3 months, or take a bath for 6 weeks after surgery**
- Do not put any creams on the wound
- For the first week after surgery, after every shower, pat the wound dry

COLLAR

- **You will be placed in a cervical collar. It can be taken off for showering and meals only**

EXERCISES

- The best exercise is walking. Small amounts frequently are best
- Follow the guidelines given to you by the physical therapist in hospital

POSTURE

- Avoid sitting for over an hour without taking a break
- Keep mobile- change positions frequently
- **Do not lift more than 2kg (5 lb) for the first 6 weeks after surgery. Avoid bending.**

DRIVING

- It is illegal to drive in a collar

RETURN TO WORK

- It is best you take 4 weeks off from work after surgery.
- Light desk work can be commenced after this time. Make sure your computer monitor is at eye level (put the yellow pages under it to lift it up)
- Wait until seen at 6 weeks before planning anything more strenuous than this

PAIN RELIEF

- **It is very painful for 2-3 weeks but the pain settles! Be patient!!**
- Tylenol (#1, 2 or 3), Percocet or Vicodin can be taken for wound pain after surgery
- Robaxin or Flexeril is used for muscle spasm
- The wound pain settles in 2-4 weeks.
- Numbness is very slow to recover if at all
- Pins and needles are not uncommon after surgery but should settle over time
- **Do not take any antiinflammatories (eg Voltaren, Mobic) or smoke for 3 months after surgery**

FOLLOW-UP

- **You need to see your neurosurgeon or his PA 2 weeks after surgery**
- **You will need some x-rays of your neck at 6 weeks.**

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 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**