



**\*POST OP WOUND, AND SCAR CREAMS WILL BE MAILED FROM ADVANCED RX.**

**\*POST OP MEDICATIONS WILL BE SENT TO YOUR PHARMACY ON FILE.**

## Post-Operative Lumbar/Thoracic (Back) Surgery Guidelines

### PLEASE DO NOT:

- DO NOT Lift, push, pull or carry anything more than 10 pounds.
- DO NOT Smoke/chew/dip any tobacco products (nicotine slows the healing process)
- DO NOT Resume anti-inflammatories (aka NSAID's) until directed by your physician as these medications can slow down healing.

### Post-Operative Appointment

- Your first appointment in the office will be in two weeks from surgery.
- Please refer to the "Where to check-in" information sheet for appointment details.
- Should you need to change this appointment please call the office at 469.998.2273.

### Post-op Rx:

- As stated above, these Rx will be sent to your pharmacy on file. DO NOT take more than prescribed. Call our office if written Rx is not managing your pain during recovery.
- The scar cream from Advanced Rx can be used once your incision has begun to scab.

### Brace

- You will wear the brace for 2 weeks; at your 2-week appt., the doctor/PA will instruct you further.
- You do not need to sleep in it.
- You do not need to wear it around the house unless instructed.
- In general, any time you step outside your front door for the first 2 week, you should have the brace on.

### Wound Care and Bathing

- Your wound will be dressed with a waterproof dressing for 5 days; there are additional dressing supplies (tegaderm) in your "Post-op Kit".
- You will also have steri-strips covering your incision under the tegaderm and gauze; these will fall off on their own as you heal. DO NOT remove them. If they fall off, there are additional steri-strips in your "Post-op Kit".
- DO NOT apply any ointment, such as Neosporin, to the incision.

**If you experience any of the following, please contact us immediately at 469.998.2273:**

- Increased redness, streaking from the wound
- Wound opening, increasing drainage, or foul odor
- Increased pain not controlled with medication
- Fever of 101 or above
- Chills, vomiting, or nausea

## **Sleeping**

The recommended position is on your back with a pillow placed under the knees – this helps take the pressure off your lower back. If you are a side sleeper, place a pillow between your knees to help prevent muscle spasms. Sleeping on your stomach can add extra stress to your back so please avoid the position. In the hospital, therapy will teach you the “log rolling” technique to get in and out of bed. This will keep you from twisting your body and decrease your pain.

## **Eating**

Once your bowel habits have returned to normal, you may eat anything you want. Your body needs a well-balanced diet for healing. Often, supplementing your diet with a multivitamin and protein shakes will help ensure you are getting all of the nutrition you need.

## **Riding in a Vehicle**

You may find it helpful to recline the passenger seat and place a small pillow behind your lower back to use for lumbar support for the first 7 to 14 days. You cannot/should not operate a vehicle while on pain medications. You should not drive until you have full range of motion, are off pain medications and muscle relaxers, and have full strength in your legs.

You should wear your brace if you were given one while riding in a vehicle or being out and about for the first 2 weeks.

## **Sitting**

This is the hardest position for your back. You want to try to avoid sitting for extended periods of time. Please do not sit longer than it takes to watch a show or movie. Please be sure to get up often - even if it is to just to stand or take a short walk around the house. This will help keep the blood pumping through your legs and help prevent blood clots. It may be helpful to set a timer to go off every 30 – 45 minutes to remind yourself to get up and move.

## **Exercise**

For the first few weeks after surgery, walking is the best exercise. We would like you up and walking as much as possible. This is very important to strengthen your back muscles and to help your nerves recover. We would like you to try to build up to walking at least 30 minutes a day by your 2 weeks visit. Often, we will arrange home therapy to help you achieve this goal.

## **Bathroom Habits**

Constipation following surgery is common. Pain medications, decreased activity, and changes in your diet are some of the reasons for this. Please be sure to drink adequate amounts of water and eat a sensible diet every day. Please try to walk as much as possible. If you experience constipation, we recommend using a gentle over the counter stool softener such as Senokot-S, Correctol, Dulcolax, Ex-lax, or Colace. Do not just add fiber, such as Metamucil, as this can add bulk to your stomach that can make the issue worse. In dire cases, magnesium citrate chilled in the fridge works great. As a last resort, enemas or suppositories can help alleviate the problem.

## **Paperwork**

We understand that having surgery may mean you will be off work for an extended period. If this is the case, you will likely have several documents/forms that may need to be completed for your employer. Please allow 5-7 business days for this paperwork to be handled. A fee will need to be paid before the documents are released. Delivery and handling of this paperwork is handled at [records@spinecareofnorthtexas.com](mailto:records@spinecareofnorthtexas.com) or may be faxed to 469.998.2272.