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Recovering from Cervical Surgery

You have recently undergone surgery on your cervical (neck) spine for disc disease.

Once you get home after your short stay in the hospital, there are some routine care strategies that will improve your recovery and there are many questions you may have which we will try to address for you here. Although these guidelines have been customized to apply to your particular surgery, as always, do not hesitate to call with any concerns.

Our goal is to help you achieve optimal recovery and to restore you to your normal activities as soon possible, but this will require help from you.

Symptoms:

1. You may have persistent or recurrent symptoms even after surgery. This is common during the healing process and is usually due to nerve swelling and irritation. Pain usually goes away quicker than numbness and tingling and weakness (if you have it) usually takes a long time to improve. It is also normal for symptoms to abate for the first few days after surgery and then to return again after a period of time. Again, this is usually just from nerve irritation and part of the healing process.
2. It is very common for people to experience muscular pain in the back of their necks for a few weeks following surgery. This is due to the surgery itself and is to be expected. Ice, massage, and continued movement are the best treatments for this.
3. Normal range of motion of your neck is not only okay, but necessary to recover. If you limit your normal, daily range of motion, the back of your neck will tense up and hurt more than it would otherwise.

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4. Swallowing may be a problem for you after surgery, especially heavier foods and pills. This is due to local swelling and, if you had a metal plate placed at the time of surgery, this may exacerbate the issue. It almost always improves within a few weeks and rarely prevents people from eating or drinking. If, however, you experience difficulty breathing, call our office immediately. This may require emergent attention.
5. Post-operatively, it is not uncommon to feel more tired than usual and even be nauseated and lack a normal appetite. This may last for several weeks.

Activities and Restrictions:

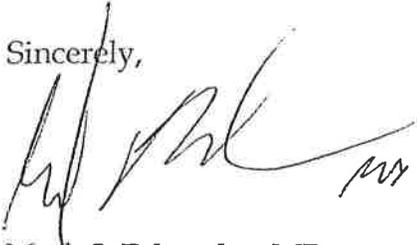
1. You are encouraged to take short walks multiple times a day during your recovery. You may climb stairs and ride in the car immediately.
2. You should hold off on driving for 5 to 7 days following surgery, or until you are not taking narcotics anymore, whichever comes first.
3. Light-duty activities, such as preparing meals, washing clothes or dishes, can be resumed almost immediately, but using an upright vacuum should not be attempted for a couple of weeks.
4. Repetitive Lifting above the shoulders should not be done, but it's okay to raise your arms above shoulder level. You should limit your lifting to 10 pounds for the first week or so.
5. If your work does not require any lifting, you may return at your leisure after a week or two. If you need a letter from our office to do so, please call the secretary and give her a day or two to complete the necessary forms.
6. Use of a cervical collar depends on what exactly your surgery entailed.
 - If you were sent home with only a soft collar, it is to be used for comfort only and also when you are in a car, either riding or driving for the first 2 weeks.
 - If you were sent home with a soft and hard cervical collar, please wear the hard collar when you are up and about and the soft collar when you are in bed until your physician tells you that you may discontinue their use.
 - If you were only sent home with a hard collar, please wear it at all times until your physician tells you that you may discontinue its use.

surgery, you must peel them off. This is done easiest immediately after showering.

2. You may shower the day after surgery, but do not soak in a tub, pool, jacuzzi, etc for at least 3 weeks so the wound has time to heal.
3. Do not put any lotions or ointments on the incision for 3 weeks.
4. Mild swelling and redness around the incision is normal. You may even have some spotty discharge, but if you have any concerns about infection, please give us a call as early in the day as possible in case we need to see you.

We are devoted to giving you the best care possible and if you have any problems, every effort will be made to address them in a timely fashion. Thank you for allowing us to be involved in your care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark S. Eskander' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark S. Eskander, MD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Oliver, PA-C'.

Laura Oliver, PA-C