

Cervical Laminoplasty Postoperative Instructions

Wound Care

- Keep incision area dry and clean. Do not put any ointments or antibiotic solutions on the incision. Let the steri-strips fall off by themselves. You should remove them after two weeks. If you notice **any drainage**, redness, swelling or increased pain at the incision sites, call the office immediately. You may use an ice pack for 7 days after surgery to help with incisional discomfort as needed.
- Under anesthesia, the hair on the back of your head and neck will be trimmed to expose the surgical site.
- You will likely go home from the hospital with a drain. Please refer to the postoperative drain instruction sheet provided to you for any additional showering, incision, and drain care instructions.
- You may shower 3-4 days after your surgery, as long as you do not have a drain in place. Remove your dressings after 5 days. Do not take a bath or get into a pool for two weeks.
- For the best cosmetic result, keep your incision away from direct sunlight and tanning booths until it fades completely to flesh tone. Otherwise, there is a risk of permanent discoloration. You may use vitamin E lotion to massage the incision after 6 weeks.
- The soft collar is optional and for comfort only. Stop using the collar after 7 days. You may resume driving when you are no longer taking narcotics or using the cervical collar.
- Increasing your protein intake will improve your rate of successful healing.

Activities and Restrictions

- At around the one week mark, you should gently start to restore your neck motion with slow head turning and up-and-down motions. Returning to full motion usually takes 3 months.
- You can walk as much as you wish. Stair climbing is permitted.
- You may engage in sexual activity when it is not painful.
- No sporting activities until released by your doctor.
- No lifting over 20 pounds until 6 weeks after surgery.
- No vigorous pulling with your arms.
- Minimize overhead activities. You may raise your arms overhead to wash or brush your hair, but stop if it becomes painful.
- For the next 2 years, you should take antibiotics prior to any dental work or invasive medical procedure. If possible, avoid dental procedures for 6 weeks after surgery.
- Do not take anti-inflammatory medication (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen) or blood thinning medication (e.g., Coumadin, Plavix, Lovenox, Fragmin) for 1 week before and 1 week after surgery, unless specifically discussed with your surgeon. You may resume aspirin 1 week after surgery.

Questions and Emergencies

Call 815-398-9491 during business hours for questions and emergencies (Monday-Thursday 8 A.M. to 4 P.M., Friday 8 A.M. to noon). **Medication refills will only be authorized during business hours.** Please specify if you calling for an emergency and you will be connected with the spine nurse. All emergencies are reported to the physician immediately.

After business hours, you may 815-398-9491 and the answering service will contact your physician. If he is out of town or if it is the weekend, another physician or physician's assistant will be available.