

ATLANTIC SPINE SPECIALISTS

Cervical Disorders • Degenerative Disorders • Spinal Trauma • Low Back Pain • Spinal Tumors • Scoliosis • Microsurgery

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POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERVICAL DISCECTOMY

Wound Care

- Remove outer dressing over cervical wound 48 hours after surgery and leave wound uncovered and exposed to the air. Underneath this outer dressing will be steri-strips (small pieces of tape). If you perspire a lot you should keep the wound covered with a single gauze dressing changed twice daily for one week.
- 72 hours after surgery you may take a shower and get the surgical wound wet. Do not soap or scrub the wound. You may not go in a bathtub, pool, Jacuzzi or any body of water for approximately two months. Gently pat the wound dry after the shower. The steri-strips will frequently fall off within 1 – 2 weeks of surgery. Sutures closing the wound are placed under the surface of the skin and will dissolve on their own. You can remove the collar during your shower, be careful not to move your neck very much
- Do not apply any creams or lotions to your incision unless otherwise directed by your physician.

Medications

- You may be given one medication to take after you leave the hospital:
 - 1) A pain pill which you can take as you need it.

Activity Restriction

- Avoid bending or twisting your neck. You should wear the cervical collar that you will receive from the hospital for three days. The collar does not completely restrict your neck movement. You should consciously try to avoid neck bending or twisting. You should wear the collar while sleeping for the first three days.
- You may ride in a car as a passenger. You may drive after 3 weeks.

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What to expect after surgery

- The majority of all patients will experience significant reduction of their arm pain shortly after surgery depending on: The duration of the symptoms before surgery, the amount of nerve inflammation and the extent of the nerve compression. Arm pain can continue on for several weeks. It is also not uncommon in the first several weeks after surgery for the nerve to remain intermittently irritated.
- You may have a sore throat or some mild trouble swallowing. This is normal and will go away.
- If your incision becomes red or oozes you should call the office immediately. If your temperature goes over 101 you should immediately contact the office.
- It is common after surgery and while on pain medication to experience constipation. Should this occur you may use milk of magnesia (MOM). If the MOM does not work the next step is to buy Citrate of Magnesium (it looks like a little bottle of ginger ale and is over the counter at your local pharmacy) and you should follow the directions on the bottle.

If you should have any questions please feel free to contact the office.