



## **Frequently Asked Questions After Spine Surgery**

### **WILL I WEAR A SPINE BRACE?**

Not all surgeries require a brace, please check with your surgeon. If you are advised to wear a brace, this is worn while out of bed, except to shower, for an estimated 3 months but is dependent on your surgeon's instructions.

### **WHAT CAN I EXPECT MY LEVEL OF ACTIVITY TO BE LIKE AFTER SURGERY?**

No strenuous activity for 1-2 weeks after surgery. We encourage frequent walks and increasing the distance gradually to tolerance. No sitting for longer than 30-45 minutes without changing position. If you had placement of hardware (fusion) there may be specific instructions from your surgeon about pushing, pulling, bending, twisting or lifting greater than 5-15 pounds.

### **WHEN CAN I SHOWER?**

Showers can be taken after Day 1 of surgery. However, cover the incision until staples or sutures are removed. If you have steri-strips, cover your incision for 5 days only then OK to get wet. Avoid targeting water pressure directly on incision. If incision becomes wet, pat dry instead of rubbing to avoid irritation.

### **CAN I DRIVE AFTER SURGERY?**

We do not recommend driving while taking narcotic pain medications. Additionally no driving for 2-3 weeks while taking any new medications that cause drowsiness.

### **WHAT SHOULD I EAT?**

We encourage drinking 6-8 glasses of water daily, unless otherwise instructed. Eat foods high in protein to promote wound healing.

### **WILL I BE ABLE TO SMOKE?**

No smoking for at least 3 months as this may decrease wound and bone healing. We encourage you to quit smoking for your health and healing process after surgery.

### **WILL I HAVE PHYSICAL THERAPY?**

You will be encouraged to have physical therapy prior to and during your hospitalization, however check with your surgeon whether therapy is recommended after your specific surgery.

### **WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK?**

This depends on your surgery. For simple surgeries, you may return from 2-8 weeks. More complex surgeries or placement of hardware (fusion) may anticipate 8-12 weeks.

### **WHEN ARE MY STAPLES/SUTURES/STERISTRIPS REMOVED?**

Typically 10-14 days by your surgeon's nurse.

### **WHEN WILL I SEE MY SURGEON?**

Prior to surgery a six-week post-op visit is scheduled. This date will be on your hospital discharge instructions. If you do not have a visit scheduled, please call the spine surgery office.