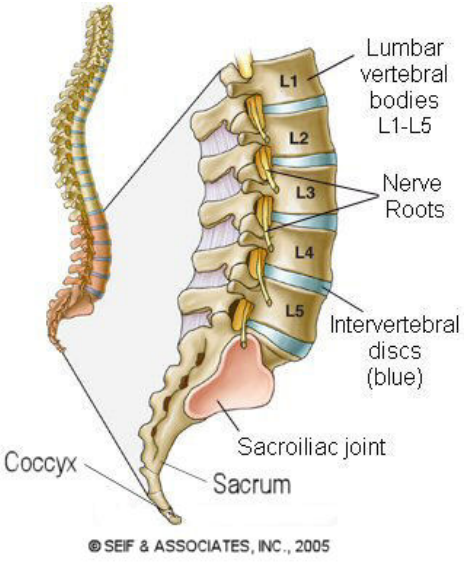
Lumbar or Cervical Fusion
Care After Surgery

Read the instructions outlined below and refer to this sheet in the next few weeks. These discharge instructions provide you with general information on caring for yourself after you leave the hospital. Your caregiver may also give you specific instructions. While your treatment has been planned according to the most current medical practices available, unavoidable complications occasionally occur. If you have any problems or questions after discharge, call your caregiver.

All surgeries and procedures carry risks, even when performed under the best of conditions and when performed by the best of hands. Consider surgery carefully, proceed with caution, and be fully informed.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- It will be normal to be sore for a couple weeks following surgery. See your caregiver if this seems to be getting worse rather than better.
- You may resume normal diet and activities as directed or allowed. Avoid lifting until you are instructed otherwise.
- Use showers for bathing, until seen or unless instructed otherwise.
- You may apply ice to the surgical site for 15 minutes each hour while awake for the first couple days following surgery. Put the ice in a plastic bag and place a towel between the bag of ice and your skin.
- Change dressings if necessary or as directed.
- Avoid driving a car until given the OK by your caregiver.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Make an appointment to have your stitches or staples removed by your caregiver when instructed.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- There is pus coming from the wound.
- There is drainage from a wound lasting longer than one day.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 100.4º F (38º C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- The wound (*incision*) separates or breaks open after the stitches have been removed.
- You develop dizzy episodes or fainting while standing or develop shortness of breath.
- You develop persistent nausea or vomiting.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing, or develop any reaction or side effects to medicines given.

Document Released: 03/26/2009 Document Re-Released: 05/06/2010
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