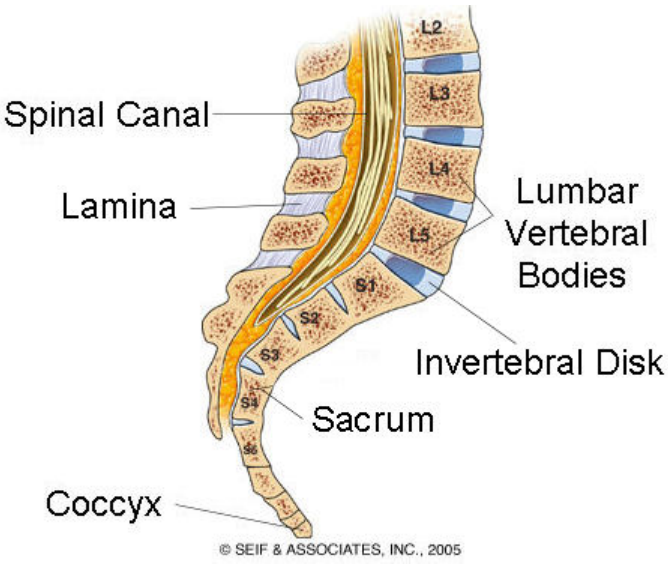
Lumbar Laminectomy, Care After Surgery

You have had a *laminectomy* (entire lamina removed) as a treatment for your back problem. This procedure involves removal of bone to relieve pressure on nerve roots. The time spent in surgery depends on the findings found in surgery and what is necessary to correct the problems.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS



- Check the cut *(incision)* made by the surgeon twice a day for signs of infection. Some signs may include a foul smelling, greenish or yellowish discharge from the wound, increased pain, or increased redness over the *operative* (incision) site. There may also be an opening of the incision, flu-like symptoms, or a temperature above 101.5° F (38.6° C).
- Change your bandages in about 24 to 36 hours following surgery, or as directed.
- You may shower once the bandage is removed, or as directed. Avoid bathtubs, swimming pools, and hot tubs for three weeks or until your incision has healed completely. If you have stitches or staples, they may be removed 2 to 3 weeks after surgery, or as directed by your doctor.
- Follow your doctor's instructions as to safe activities, exercises, and physical therapy.
- Weight reduction may be helpful if you are overweight.
- Daily exercise is helpful to prevent the return of problems. Walking is permitted. You may use a treadmill without an incline. Cut down on activities and exercise if you have discomfort. You may also go up and down stairs as much as you can tolerate.
- DO NOT lift anything heavier than 10 to 15 lbs. Avoid bending or twisting at the waist. **Always** bend your knees.
- Maintain strength and range of motion as instructed.
- Do not drive for 2 to 3 weeks, or as directed by your doctor. You may be a passenger for 20 to 30 minute trips. Laying back in the passenger seat may be more comfortable for you.
- Limit your sitting to 20 to 30 minute intervals. You should lie down or walk in between sitting periods. There are no limitations for sitting in a recliner chair.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increased bleeding (more than a small spot) from the wound.
- You notice redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- Pus is coming from wound.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) develops.
- You notice a foul smell coming from the wound or dressing.
- You have increasing pain in your wound.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a rash.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You have any allergic problems.

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