

FLORIDA BACK INSTITUTE
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Postoperative Spine Surgery Discharge Instructions – Cervical Spine

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

General Activities: First 2 weeks after surgery:

1. You may shower 7 days after the surgery. Remove the cervical collar before getting in the shower. If you have a Dennison 2-poster metal brace, then do not remove it. Do not let water directly hit the neck and hip (or leg) incision. Do not move your neck frontwards or backwards nor from side to side without the brace on in the shower. If something is dropped, do not bend to pick it up (leave it there!) Have shower items at eye-level for you to reach and someone nearby to help. If you do not feel comfortable taking a shower at this time, you may sponge bath. Do not take tub baths! You may not shower if the incisions are reddened or draining.
2. The Steri-Strips on the incision may come off; however, do not remove them until 10 days after the surgery. Change dressing to incision every day with 4 x 4 gauze and tape. Once the drainage has stopped, you may leave it open to air.
 3. No driving while taking narcotic pain medications (i.e., Vicodin, Percocet).
4. You may walk for exercise, starting at a moderate pace only, and only for 1/2 hour each time. You may increase this as tolerated.
5. Stairs may be used with caution several times per day.
6. No lifting more than 10 pounds (a gallon of milk), and keep the weight close to your chest. No bending or twisting at the waist, or reaching overhead to pick up objects.
7. Take the cervical collar off at least once per day. (Do not do this if you have a 2-poster metal brace). Have someone help you with this. Check the skin for any skin breakdown and to clean the neck. You may use powder to absorb moisture on the neck where the brace is. Do not use lotion, (as this will cause an increased chance of skin breakdown where the brace is worn). Keep the brace on at all times, except for when changing the neck dressing, showering, or cleaning around the neck.

When to call the office:

1. If you have a fever over 101.6 degrees Fahrenheit, chills, or nausea for over 24 hours in duration that is not related to a cold or flu.
2. If you have redness around the incision or drainage from the incision (more than a quarter size on the gauze dressing).
3. Increased pain (that is not relieved by all the prescribed pain medication), or weakness in the legs. Expect some numbness and tingling, but this should resolve in time.

Follow-up appointment: Call office after discharge at (561)-988-8988