

## **Post- Operative Instructions**

- **MEDICATION** – *Medication is prescribed to you to be taken on an as needed basis and not intended to be taken more than what is indicated on the medication bottle.* Any use beyond this is inappropriate unless otherwise directed by the Physician. (Prescription questions and refill requests may take up to 72 hours to process, please plan ahead. Some medications cannot be called into the pharmacy and need the prescription to be picked up at the office and hand delivered to the pharmacy.)
  - **Pain medication** is to be taken if needed up to the frequency indicated. If the pain medication is *not needed it should not be taken.* There will not be any early refill of pain medication except for outstanding circumstances, final decision on this is made by the medical provider, not the office staff.
  - If prescribed an **antibiotic**, this should be taken as prescribed even if you are feeling better. It is necessary to complete the antibiotic prescription to rid your body of the infection/concern for infection and avoid development of bacterial resistance to antibiotics in the future.
  - **Muscle relaxer medication** may be taken in the same fashion as that of pain medication and is indicated above.
- **BATHING** – For the first 24 hours after surgery we do not recommend any shower or bathing, simple sponge bathing is fine; avoid applying water or soap directly to the surgical sites. After 24 hours, you may shower but should not allow for direct shower pressure to the surgical sites. Shower with bandages on and change bandages to new, clean, dry bandages after showering/ drying off. All bathing (bath tub, pool or hot tub) should be avoided for 4 weeks after date of surgery.
- **CHANGE DRESSING DAILY AFTER FIRST 24 HOURS!**
- **RETURN / FOLLOW UP VISITS** – Every surgical patient should expect a scheduled post op visit about 2 weeks after surgery. The following post op appointments may vary depending upon the surgical procedure and concerns, but the typical schedule is 4-6 weeks after the previous appointment.
- **OBSERVATIONS** – Likely findings: swelling, tenderness, minor redness close to the surgical site, minor bleeding or seeping blood, mild thin liquid drainage (may be clear to yellow or pink tinged) from the surgical site. Concerning findings would be increase in temperature of the skin in conjunction with extended redness to the surgical site, may or may not be associated with a fever over 100.8 orally.
- **BACK BRACE/CERVICAL COLLAR USE** – Back brace/cervical collar should be used regularly for the first 4 weeks after surgery to help minimize pain and support the surgical site itself. Further use will be addressed at the time of the first follow up visit.
- **BONE STIMULATOR USE** – In some cases, a bone stimulator will be ordered. If one is assigned to you as a patient, follow the directions given to you by the representative of the bone stimulator company.
- **IMAGING** – Follow up imaging is typical but not at the time of the first post op visit. When seen 2 weeks after surgery, imaging orders will be provided to you as necessary.
- **PHYSICAL THERAPY** – Not all patients will require, nor do we ALWAYS recommend physical therapy after surgical intervention. If it is assigned, it will be addressed at the time of the first post op visit.
- **TOBACCO USE** – All tobacco/ nicotine use is detrimental to the healing of the spine after surgery, use will also degenerate the spine at a more rapid pace than normal. We always recommend cessation of nicotine. This should be done through your primary care physician if needed.