



Spine Discharge Instructions

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Anterior Cervical Fusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Cervical Laminectomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Lumbar Laminotomy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posterior Cervical Fusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Lumbar Laminectomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinal Fusion |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Kyphoplasty |

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Northern Light Spine Surgery
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Warning signs - Call your surgeon's office if you experience any of the following:

- Redness, swelling, warmth, or drainage from your incision.
- Pain that is worse than before the surgery or new numbness or weakness that doesn't go away with rest
- Fever above 101 degrees and /or shaking chills
- Loss of control of your bowels or bladder; frequent urination, burning pain or the inability to urinate
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- Increased difficulty swallowing or breathing

IF YOU DEVELOP A MEDICAL PROBLEM – CONTACT YOUR SURGEON OR CALL 911

Medications & Pain Control

Refer to your discharge medication list for further instructions about your medications.

Pain

- Take your pain medication as ordered on the prescription. Please be aware that if you do not need the pain medication you do not have to take it.
- Reduce the amount and frequency of your opioid pain medication as your post-operative pain diminishes.
- Always take pain medication with food.
- You are advised against driving or operating any machinery while taking your prescription medication.
- Do not drink beer, wine or hard liquor while taking your pain medication.
- No NSAID'S (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) for 1 week after your surgery unless otherwise instructed by your medical provider.
- To reduce swelling and inflammation on the incision line, we encourage that you apply ice packs over the wound dressing for 20 minutes every 1 hour for the first 48-72 hours after surgery while awake. This can help decrease incisional pain and the need to take increasing doses of narcotic pain medication.
- You can take Tylenol (Acetaminophen) 500 mg every 6 hours by mouth as needed for pain. Do not exceed 3000 mg in 24hr.

Constipation

- Add an over-the-counter stool softener such as Colace or Senokot to your medication regimen while taking narcotic pain medication. This will help to prevent opioid induced constipation.

Activity

- You can drive once you stop taking narcotic pain medication and you have good range of motion returned to your neck/back.
- Light exercise promotes healing (for example walking short distances). Stop if you experience unusual pain or discomfort and if you do not improve with rest, contact your surgeon's office.
- Avoid excessive twisting, lifting, pulling, tugging, and bending. Avoid positions that may place pressure of tension over the incision line.
- Do not lift anything heavier than eight pounds (similar to a gallon of milk) until your scheduled follow up visit.

White Anti-embolism Stockings:

- You’ve been provided a pair of white stockings. Wear them during the day for 2 weeks. Take them off at night and wash as needed.

Diet:

- Eat small, frequent meals at first and increase as tolerated. Increase dietary fiber (bran cereal, fruits, vegetables) to avoid constipation, especially while taking your pain medication. Make sure you drink plenty of fluids.
- **For Anterior Cervical Fusions:** eat soft foods, take small bites, sit upright for your meals and eat slowly. A sore throat is common and will continue to improve with time.

Hygiene & Dressing:

- Limit touching the wound directly until it has healed.
- **Do not take a tub bath, swim, or immerse your surgical area in water until seen in follow up by your medical provider.**
- Do not apply ointments or creams to your wound until it has healed and there is no scab or opening of the skin edges.
- Make sure you or someone else checks your incision daily for redness, swelling, or drainage.

Your incision will be closed with:

Dermabond glue (Skin Glue) – it will peel off on its own

- You may shower the day following your surgery. You do not need to cover the incision. Do not scrub the site. Pat dry.
- Cover wound with dry gauze only if you have drainage or if irritated by your clothing/waistband.

Sutures and Steri-Strips

- Keep the dressing clean and dry for 24 hours. If the dressing becomes wet, you may need to apply a fresh, dry dressing
- Cover wound with dry gauze and change daily until there is no more drainage.
- You may shower after surgery, but cover the wound with plastic and tape to keep wound dry for the next several days.
- Your Steri-Strips will fall off over the next 2-3 weeks. If the ends lift off the skin, they may be trimmed for comfort.
- If you have dissolving sutures, they do NOT need to be removed.
- If you have sutures, they will need to be removed in 2-3 weeks at your post-op visit.

Return to Work:

- You may return to work as instructed by your physician.

Appointment/Follow Up:

- Keep follow up appointment as scheduled Call the surgeon’s office to arrange follow up appointment

If you have any questions or paperwork (disability forms) please bring them to your appointment.

- Northern Light Spine Surgery
 Lee Thibodeau, MD
 John Wahlig, MD
 Nicolas Arredondo, MD
 207-553-6054

I have read and understand these instructions.

Signature of Patient or Responsible Adult Date/Time

RN Signature Date/Time

Please call if you have any questions or concerns. It was our pleasure to take care of you and your family today.