

THE PROCEDURE

Your surgical procedure is Cervical Corpectomy and Fusion. Please keep this information for reference when calling our office. On-call physicians will need to know exactly the type of surgery you have had, and the date. Your follow-up appointment is scheduled for 6 weeks after your surgery date.

As you recover from your surgery, you should experience progressive improvement in your preoperative pain. It is not unusual to feel some pain, numbness, tightness, burning or other "funny" feelings for a while following your operation. Usually these sensations will lessen and mostly go away with time. Numbness can last for weeks to months.

At the time of discharge, the hospital nurse should give you prescriptions and a follow-up appointment. You should be given an order for X-rays of your cervical spine. These will need to be performed the week of your follow-up visit. Be certain that you have the actual x-rays when you return to my office. If you were not given a return appointment, please call our office upon arriving home to schedule this visit. Please call between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Wound Care: If you have staples or sutures in your incision, you will be given an appointment for removal one week following your operation. Most patients will have no sutures or staples that require removal. If your wound has been closed with Dermabond, please follow the care instructions from the Dermabond handout. Do not scratch the Dermabond. It will begin to slough off 7-10 days after your surgery. At this time you may use a warm wet washcloth to rub the rest of it off. If your wound has been closed with steri-strips (butterfly-like skin closures over your incision), you should remove them 7-10 days after your operation, if they have not fallen off on their own.

If your wound has been closed with Dermabond, you may get your incision wet in the shower, as soon as you wish, since this closure is waterproof. If your wound has been closed with staples, sutures or steri-strips, you may remove your dressing two days after the surgery and, at that time, you may get your incision wet in the shower. New bandages or dressings are not necessary. Use only soap and water to gently clean the area around your wound. Do not soak your incision for four weeks following the operation. During this time, bathtubs, hot tubs, swimming pools, whirlpools, and the like, are not allowed. Do not let the shower water "beat" on your incision.

You should not put any salve, lotion, ointment or Vitamin E on your incision during the first month after surgery. If you notice any problems with your incision, such as redness, drainage, swelling, etc., please call the office as soon as possible for instructions. It is not uncommon to have mild redness with staples.

Activities & Driving: You are not permitted to drive a motor vehicle for several weeks following the surgery. You may not drive while taking pain medication. It is unlikely that you will feel comfortable enough in the first 30 days to drive. You should have been fitted for a cervical collar during your office visit. Please bring your collar with you for your surgery. You should wear your cervical collar any time you are outside your house. Continue wearing it until I take it off. This will usually be done when you return to the office 4 weeks after surgery. If you have been given 2 collars, you may shower with one and change collars after showering. This allows you to have a clean collar on at all times. You should not do any lifting, bending, straining, stooping, or twisting. You should not lift anything heavier than ten pounds. The only exercise permitted, and in fact encouraged, is walking. After you have been up and around for several days, begin a walking program, gradually progressing to one mile, two to three times a day. When you return for your first postoperative visit (1 month), I will give you more exercises to do.



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Cervical Laminectomy and Fusion

Prescription Refills: You will be given several medications. One is a pain medication, which you may take regularly for the first few days following the surgery, and then as needed. You may have been given Flexeril, which helps relieve muscle spasms. You should take this medication three times a day for the first three days following the surgery and then as needed. You have been given a 30-day supply of these medications from the time of surgery and you should not require any more. If you require medication refills, please call the office between 9AM and 4 PM, Monday through Friday. We will try to expedite the refilling of your meds, but please allow us 24 hours to fulfill your request. **Please Note: *The on-call physician will not refill prescriptions at night or on weekends.***

You may NOT take **anti-inflammatory** medications such as Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Celebrex, Nuprin or Vioxx in the first 3 months following surgery. These medications will interfere with the fusion process and can limit your progress. Tylenol or Acetaminophen is okay to take and will not affect your fusion process. You should NOT smoke or use any **tobacco** during the first 6 months following your surgery. The nicotine in tobacco severely blocks the fusion process. Your fusion takes approximately 6-12 months to take place. If your fusion does not heal, you could require more surgery.

Sexual Activities: You may resume sexual activities once your post-operative pain subsides. For females, take necessary precautions to avoid pregnancy until your fusion is solid and you have discussed pregnancy with me.

Out of Work: You can expect to be out of work for a minimum of three to six weeks following your operation, depending on your healing progress and type of work you do.

We want your surgical experience to go smoothly. If you have any questions or problems, please do not hesitate to call the office at 508.771.0006.

You may find the following websites to be helpful regarding your surgery: www.allaboutneckpain.com, www.spineuniverse.com, www.neurosurgery.org, www.spinehealth.com, www.allaboutbackpain.com.

Thank you for letting me take part in your care,

Achilles Papavasiliou, MD
Paul Houle, MD
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G. Kenji Nakata, MD