

Provider: Conor Regan, MD

Posterior Cervical Post-Op Instructions

You may remove any dressings upon arriving at home. The incision is covered by Dermabond (skin glue) which will fall off on its own in 2 to 3 weeks. If you had a drain in the hospital, please leave the dressing on the drain site for 12 hours after which it can be removed and then you can shower.

You may shower. Letting the soap and water run over the incision does not harm it. Do not take a bath or go swimming until after your first postoperative office visit. If there was a dressing on the drain site, wait 24 hours after the drain was removed and then you can remove the dressing and shower.

You may sleep in whatever position you like after the surgery. Some patients have found that sleeping in a recliner makes it easier to get out of bed in the morning, but you can sleep on a regular bed if you want.

You may drive when you are off pain medications after surgery. Make sure to practice in a parking lot as your neck will be stiff initially. Most patients find that it takes 2 to 3 weeks for them to get to the point where driving is possible.

You will have a lot of muscle spasms and neck soreness for the first few weeks. You will find that moving around is helpful and that the worst pain occurs when you change positions such as from sitting to standing or laying down to standing up. This will get better as you get further out from surgery.

Please do not take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications for the first 6 to 8 weeks. These include medications like ibuprofen, Motrin, Aleve, naproxen, diclofenac, meloxicam, and Celebrex. Studies have shown that the fusion is harmed by taking these medications early in the postoperative period.

You are allowed to move your neck however you wish; just be gentle. Although you will not ruin the surgery by moving your neck, you will probably be sore initially. You may lift however much you like, though be forewarned that your neck will be sorer as you increase your activities.

Decrease your pain medications as fast as possible after surgery to avoid their side effects. You may cut the pills in half to decrease the dose if needed and start to space out the doses longer and longer. Make sure that you are taking a laxative after surgery as the pain medications are very constipating. If you have not been given a prescription, make sure to

pick up an over-the-counter laxative when you get your postoperative prescriptions. Dulcolax, MiraLAX, and sennosides are the most popular and work well.