



LUMBAR LAMINECTOMY/DISCECTOMY

PATIENT EDUCATION FORM

MEDICATIONS:

- You will be prescribed pain medication such as Norco, Percocet, or Oxycodone; and possibly a muscle relaxant or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, such as Advil, ibuprofen, Aleve, Motrin, etc.
- The first days following your surgery you most likely will take pain medication routinely in order to control your pain. However, after several days you may notice you do not need to take the medication as often and you can begin to take it as needed.
- You may **NOT** take pain medications more often than ordered. If you feel your pain is not well controlled contact our office.
- If you are taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) in addition to the prescribed medication it is **important to NOT exceed four grams (4000 milligrams) per day**. The base of the pain medication is often acetaminophen (Tylenol).
- A common side effect of pain medication is constipation. It is important to eat a well-balanced diet and drink plenty of water. Most likely you will need to take an over-the-counter stool softener while you are taking the pain medication.

ACTIVITY:

- ***The most important thing you can do to aid recovery is to be up and moving around.*** Walk each day and steadily increase the amount of walking you do. Your muscles will become stiff and sore if you are not up and walking. Immobility also leads to an increased risk of blood clots, particularly after surgery.
- Avoid running or walking on steep inclines.
- Avoid bending, twisting, or stooping. If you need to bend down, bend at the knees, and not at the waist. It will be less painful to use your thigh muscles rather than your lower back muscles.
- **DO NOT LIFT** anything greater than **5 pounds** until your first postoperative visit.
- Avoid sitting or standing positions for more than 20 to 30 minutes at a time.
- If you have been given an abdominal binder or an adjustable lumbar brace, wear it when you are up and moving. A brace will help support and stabilize your lower back muscles. It may be taken off for short periods of time, such as while you shower or when you are in a seated position. **After 3 weeks** begin to wean yourself from the brace so that your muscles will be required to do more work.
- You may resume sexual activity when you feel ready.
- You may drive when you feel you can tolerate it. This typically is around two weeks after surgery. Remember **NOT** to drive immediately after taking your pain medication or muscle relaxant.
- Your surgeon will discuss your return to work at your follow-up appointment if earlier arrangements have not been made.

INCISION:

- You may remove the outer dressing after being home for **24 hours**. The outer dressing is gauze and tape and may be removed but leave the adhesive strips in place. If you are wearing a collar, you may apply dry gauze and tape daily until your follow-up appointment.

- Your incision will be closed with sutures or staples. Many sutures do not need to be removed because they are absorbed by the body. If you have staples or removable sutures, these will be taken out at your first follow-up appointment in **two to three weeks**.
- **Keep your incision clean and dry at all times.** You may shower but must cover the adhesive strips by water-sealing your incision. This can be done by covering the incision with Glad Press-N-Seal™ during your shower and removing it after your shower. When showering keep your incision away from the stream of water. No bathing or soaking of incision. No swimming in hot tubs, pools, lakes, oceans, etc.
- Do not put ointments or creams on your incision.
- As your incision heals it may itch but try to avoid scratching it.
- Often times you may get an area of swelling directly under your incision. As long as there is no redness, drainage, or tenderness the swelling will typically resolve. Watch the area closely for changes.
- Avoid swimming pools or hot tubs until cleared by your surgeon.

SCHEDULED FOLLOW UP:

- Your next follow-up visit will be **two to three weeks** following your surgery for wound evaluation. Additional follow-up will be scheduled at that time.
- **We want to evaluate you in clinic if you have any signs or symptoms of an infection.** This includes excess draining, foul odor, increased pain at the incision site, increased redness, opening of the incision, or fever greater than 101.5. Contact the clinic during regular office hours (Monday through Thursday, 8am-4pm, Friday 8am-3pm) at (314) 266-2066. After hours contact the exchange at (314) 266-2066.

REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR SPINE SURGEON:

- Pain not controlled with pain medications
- Temperature greater than 101.5
- Increased redness, tenderness, opening of your incision, any drainage, or foul odor from your incision
- Leg swelling or calf tenderness
- Increased numbness or tingling in an extremity
- Any questions or concerns you may have