

Discharge Instructions After Anterior Cervical Fusion

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1. Expect some incisional neck pain the first several days after surgery. You may also notice a sore throat and swallowing difficulties. This is usually temporary and resolves within a few weeks after surgery. If you experience inability to swallow liquids, or inability to speak, please notify us immediately.
2. Pain in the back of the neck and between the shoulder blades, arm pain or numbness may come and go for several months. Pain medications and muscle relaxants may be helpful.
3. Your surgical dressing will be removed about 24 hours after surgery. Keep incision clean and open to air. All stitches are buried under the skin. You may notice small pieces of tape called "steri-strips" or skin glue called "Dermabond". Let strips fall off naturally. If they remain on after two weeks, they may be removed by yourself or a family member. Skin glue will flake off on its own.
4. You may require to wear a cervical collar for a few weeks or months after surgery. The collar should fit snugly. You should not be able to move your head or neck while you are to remain in the collar. You should, however, move your arms and shoulders! Wear the collar only when ambulating outside or riding in a car.
5. Do not drive as long as you are required to wear a collar. Do not drive while you still take narcotic pain medications.
6. Avoid NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs; ex.: Motrin, Aleve, Advil, etc.).
7. You may shower about 72 hours after surgery. Do not bathe. Use baby shampoo for the first 4 weeks after surgery. Do not swim until cleared by Dr. Bryniarski.
8. Restrictions: no lifting more than 10 lb., no smoking, no vigorous physical activity.
9. Walking is an excellent type of exercise. It will speed up your recovery. Start slow at first, and gradually increase your activity and walking distance.
10. You will be seen by Dr. Bryniarski in his office usually about three weeks after surgery. If you don't have an appointment prior to leaving the hospital, please call our office. You may also require to have a post-op scan (XR-ray, CT or MRI) which will be arranged by Dr. Bryniarski's assistant who will call you with the appointment.
11. Call our office when you develop: signs or symptoms of infection (redness, wound drainage, swelling, severe tenderness, severe back pain, fever > 101 F), inability to swallow or speak, new or worsening arm weakness or numbness.