



P 303-783-8844 | F 303-783-2002 | cbsi@cbsi.md

Posterior Cervical Decompression and Fusion Post Operative Instructions

Diet:

- Eat a regular diet as tolerated.

How to deal with constipation:

- Increase fluid intake.
- Increase physical activity (walking).
- Eat fiber-rich foods.
- Recommended over-the-counter medications include Colace (twice daily), Miralax (once or twice daily), magnesium citrate, milk of magnesia, Senna, suppositories, and Fleets enemas.

What are my restrictions?

- Wear your cervical collar at all times, except to eat, sleep, and shower.
- Do not drive until your 2 week postoperative visit; if you are cleared of your cervical collar at that visit, no further driving restrictions will remain, unless you continue to require narcotic pain medications or muscle relaxants.
- Never drive if you are taking narcotic pain medications or muscle relaxants.
- Avoid bending or twisting at the waist.
- Do not lift anything greater than 10 pounds; no pushing or pulling.
- Avoid sitting for more than 30-45 minutes at a time
- Avoid strenuous activity or high-impact exercise during your postoperative period; focus on walking as your primary source of exercise. A general rule of thumb is to walk one block for each week you are post-op, twice daily, as tolerated. Shorter, but more frequent walks are preferred to one long walk.

How to take care of my incision:

- Keep incisional dressing in place until **3 days after surgery**; thereafter, remove dressing, leaving steri strips in place, and wash daily with soap and water.
- Avoid prolonged submersion of incision for 6 weeks.
- Do not apply creams, ointments, or lotions onto or near the incision.
- Please contact us to report any signs of infection including increased redness, drainage, swelling, or fever.

How do I manage my pain?

- It's good to have realistic expectations of your pain for the first few weeks post-op; the longer the nerves have been compressed, the longer it may take for the pain to resolve. You may experience some pain around your incision(s), as well as general stiffness, nerve pain, and muscle spasms as you heal. This pain usually decreases with time. Numbness and tingling are usually the last to improve and may not go away. Pain medications and muscle relaxers will be prescribed for the first few weeks following surgery; take them as directed to keep pain at a manageable level.
- Use heat to reduce muscle spasms and stiffness and to make soft tissue more limber; heat should only be applied for 15-20 minutes at a time.
- Alternatively, ice/cold packs may help with incisional pain; do not apply ice/cold packs directly to skin and avoid greater than 15 minutes of application.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can send an email to cbsi@cbsi.md, send us a message through your secure patient portal, or give us a call at 303-783-8844.



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What medications can I take?

- Avoid taking any NSAIDS for 6 weeks postoperatively.
- Take prescriptions as instructed on prescriptions/bottles.
- Please monitor your refills closely and allow 3 business days for refill requests to be processed.
- Narcotic pain medications must be picked up at the office, or may be mailed, but cannot be called into pharmacies due to government regulations.
- If you have been discharged with changes to medications prescribed by other providers (PCP, cardiologist, rheumatologist, pulmonologist, etc.), please follow-up with the respective provider for further recommendations.
- Per our office policy, which is guided by government policy, we are only able to provide prescriptions for 3 months postoperatively; should you require medications thereafter, we will recommend pain management specialists to follow-up with if your PCP is not comfortable providing refills.
- Please have your pharmacy fax non-narcotic prescription refill requests to us directly at **303-783-2002**.

Emotional Recovery

Surgery places stress on the body's reserves. Feelings of tiredness and discouragement are normal as preoperative symptoms slowly subside. Prescription pain medications can alter sleep patterns, bowel movements, and emotional responses. A positive attitude and patience are needed for successful recovery from any surgery. You will find that each day you will feel a little better. Your recovery is unique, as you are a unique

person. By preparing ahead of time, you will feel more at ease with the entire surgery process.

Do I need physical therapy?

- During your second postoperative appointment, at 12 weeks postop, you will receive a prescription for physical therapy as well as a list of known PT facilities. This will help you regain strength, flexibility and confidence after your surgery. It is important that you attend your physical therapy appointments as scheduled and do the exercises at home as directed by your physical therapist. This will help you to continue to improve your quality of life by regaining physical strength and ability.

When can I return to work?

- This will be determined on an individual basis during your postoperative appointments, and will take into consideration your work duties and requirements. We will fax letters of Release to Return to Work to employers once dates and restrictions are determined.
- If you have additional short-term disability paperwork that needs to be processed by our office, please mail or fax it to us as soon as possible, and allow up to 30 days for completion. The first set of short term disability forms will be completed free of charge. If you require additional forms for your job, there will be a \$25 charge for each additional set. No long-term disability paperwork will be processed by our office. Please consult our website at www.cbsi.md for additional information on these policies.

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Follow up with your other providers:

- If you have been discharged home with oxygen, please follow-up with your primary care provider for further recommendations.
- If you have been discharged with a urinary catheter, please follow-up with Urology or your PCP.

Follow up with CBSI:

You will follow up with a physician assistant or your surgeon. Please call our office if you have any questions, our office phone number is **303-783-8844**.

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