

## North Jersey Spine Group: POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPINE SURGERY

1. Call the office to schedule a post-operative visit as soon as possible after you are discharged from the hospital. You should schedule an appointment for 7 to 10 days after surgery if all is going well. If you have any questions or problems call the office – you may need to be seen sooner.
2. You should walk every day after surgery – gradually increase your walking.
3. Avoid lifting, pushing, pulling or strenuous activity.
4. If you require a neck brace after surgery you may remove it for bathing if you have not been instructed otherwise. You may not drive until you no longer need to wear the brace.
5. If you require a lumbar brace you may remove it in bed if you have not been instructed otherwise.
6. The surgical dressing can be removed 3 to 5 days after surgery if the incision is clean and dry. If the dressing becomes soiled it should be changed.
7. Some drainage from the incision is common in the first 48 hours after surgery. Contact the office if you have significant drainage after 48 hours.
8. If you have sutures or surgical staples keep the incision dry until they are removed. Call the office as soon as possible to schedule an appointment for removal. Sutures or staples should be removed 7 to 10 days after surgery in most cases.
9. If your sutures are under the skin then the incision should be kept dry for 5 to 7 days after surgery. Then you may shower and allow water to run over the incision, but it should not be immersed under water for at least 3 weeks after surgery. The incision will usually be covered with Steri-strips (surgical tape) when absorbable sutures are placed under the skin. After the Steri-strips get wet they should be patted dry with a towel. If they become loose, they can be removed.
10. If you need additional pain medication call the office between 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM Monday through Friday for renewals. The covering doctor at night or on weekends may not be familiar with your case and may not be able to prescribe additional pain medication. Some medications can only be prescribed with a written prescription. Try to anticipate when you will be running short on medication to avoid problems at night, on weekends or on holidays.
11. Call the office if you have any questions or problems.