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### WHAT TO EXPECT WITH A CERVICAL SPINE FUSION

- Please be advised that you must avoid anti-inflammatory medication (e.g. Aspirin, ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Naprosyn, Vioxx, Bextra, Celebrex, etc.) for TEN DAYS before and TEN WEEKS after your surgery.
- You must discontinue the use of Fosamax for 2 weeks prior to and 12 weeks after your surgery.
- Please discontinue use of herbal supplements and Vitamin E, K, Tumeric and fish oil for TEN DAYS before surgery.
- You may be contacted by one of our representatives regarding the use of a Bone Stimulator and Compression Device (DVT). The Bone stimulator is a machine that will assist with consolidation of your fusion. The Compression Device will prevent blood clots from forming.
- You must avoid nicotine exposure for at least TWO WEEKS before and SIX WEEKS after the date of your surgery. This includes second-hand smoke.

### LENGTH OF STAY

- Anterior Fusions: Most patients stay in the hospital 1 day.
- Posterior Fusions: Most patients stay in the hospital 2-3 days.

### INCISIONS

- Anterior: Will be horizontal, vertical if greater than 2 levels, and approximately 2-3 inches long.
- Posterior: Will be vertical and approximately 4-6 inches long.

### COLLAR

- You will be given either a hard or soft collar to wear depends on the type of surgery being performed and the number of levels being operated on. This collar is to be worn at all times, except for showering and eating, until we see you at your first post-operative appointment.
- Collar must be worn while sleeping.

### MOBILITY

- The nursing and/or Physical Therapy staff will assist you with getting out of bed and walking around soon after surgery. There are no limitations to how much you can walk. Please note that you may need a walker or a cane for assistance. PLEASE remember that although you have pain it is very important that you continue to walk through the pain. Walking will **greatly** decrease muscle spasms and pain.

### NUTRITION

- You may find it difficult to swallow after surgery if you are having an anterior procedure. This is not uncommon. You may find it easier to swallow thickened liquids (yogurt, pudding) or cold drinks.
- You may find that your voice is hoarse after surgery. This too is not uncommon and usually goes away in a few days.
- Please remember that your nutrition after fusion is very important. If you find that you do not have an appetite or that solids are difficult to swallow you should try drinking nutritional supplements like Boost or Ensure. These will be helpful in adding needed calories (1-2 cans per day for 3 weeks).

### MEDICATION

- You will likely receive a prescription at your pre-operative appointment for pain and muscle spasms. It is recommended that you take an over the counter stool softener for the first two weeks as well (ie. – Senna-S).
- Narcotics are very effective for pain relief but may cause other side effects. The possible effects vary among patients and may include: sleepiness, nausea, constipation, flushing, sweating, and occasionally euphoria or confused feelings.

### PAIN

- You may experience surgical discomfort after your procedure.
- You may experience "reminder" pain after your surgery. This is pain that is similar to your preoperative pain, sometimes on the opposite side, that will go away on its own with time. This pain is due to the postoperative swelling and irritation of the nerves.
- If you're having trouble controlling your pain for several hours, please call us: **714.937.2105** Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or **714.634.4567** after hours and weekends.