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WHAT TO EXPECT WITH A THORACIC/LUMBAR 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, Turmeric 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

- You will be in the hospital for approximately 3 days.
- You will be discharged either to home or an inpatient rehab facility.

INCISIONS

- Most are approximately 4-8 inches long.

BRACE

- You will begin wearing a brace during your hospitalization.
- You will be fitted for the brace prior to surgery. If you are unsure how to properly wear the brace, please ask to speak to one of the Orthotists while you are in the hospital.

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. You may need a walker or a cane if your bone graft site is painful.
- PLEASE remember that although you have pain it is very important that you continue to walk through the pain. Walking will **greatly** decrease muscle spasm, pain, and helps with digestion.

NUTRITION

- 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).
- You will be given nutrition through your IV during the first 2-3 days of your hospital stay. You will progress to clear liquids and then to a regular diet.

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. – SennaS).
- 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.