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## **Discharge Instructions**

### **Cervical Spine Surgery**

#### **Activities**

1. **Automobiles:** Please limit the amount of time you spend in the automobile until your next doctor visit. You cannot drive until after your post op visit.
2. **Motion:** NO lifting, pushing or pulling anything over 8 pounds or a gallon of milk. No sudden neck movement. Do move/exercise your neck but not so much that it causes intense pain.
3. **Walking:** Walk on paved surfaces only. It is alright to walk up and down stairs holding onto side rails. You will recover faster and regain your strength sooner if you keep active around the house and use the techniques taught to you by the hospital technician.
4. **Sexual Activity:** No sexual activity for 3 weeks.
5. **Return to work issues:** Will be discussed at post op visit.

#### **Wound Care**

It is important to take very good care of the incision site to prevent infection. If Steri strips (small pieces of medical tape) have been placed across the length of your incision to facilitate wound closure, please leave these in place. Feel free to shower. Wash the incision with soap and water and pat dry. Do not soak in the bath or a pool. Call the office for any signs of infection including drainage from your incision site, a temperature of 101.5 for 12 hours, redness, swelling or pus at the suture line.

#### **Medications**

Prescriptions for appropriate pain medications will be given upon discharge. Take it as directed. Do not take more than what was directed on the label. You should expect to have some discomfort that will not be relieved by the medication. Neck spasm and back of the neck pain is normal. If your pain is not tolerable with the medication dosage as directed, contact the doctor. Take your antibiotic as directed. If you develop fever, you may take Tylenol according to package directions. Remember to call the office number to report temperature over 101.5 lasting more than 12 hours.

#### **Diet**

Eat a soft diet as tolerated. Drink plenty of fluids, at least 8 glasses daily. It is normal to have a feeling of fullness in your throat or feeling like something is stuck in your throat. You may have difficulty swallowing, especially pills. Constipation is a common post op problem, especially when taking narcotic pain medications. You may use an over the counter stool softener and/or laxative daily. Drinking a sufficient amount of fluids will also help with constipation. Take a multivitamin daily.

#### **Follow up**

Call the office to make your post op appointment for 10 days to 2 weeks after your surgery unless you were instructed to make your appointment sooner.

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