

TIMOTHY J. JOHANS, MD
NEUROLOGICAL SURGEON

6140 W. Curtisian, Suite 400
Boise, Idaho 83704

phone (208) 367-3500
fax (208) 367-2968

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER CERVICAL DISCECTOMY AND FUSION

1. **FOLLOW UP:** Please call the office as soon as possible to arrange your next appointment. This will be scheduled approximately one month after the surgery date. If there are any questions or problems within the first month, please call our office so we may assist you promptly. In three months you will have an appointment where we will obtain x-ray's, to further evaluate your progress.
2. **WOUND CARE:** You have a small piece of gauze with a clear plastic dressing. This is a water-proof dressing. You may shower with it. If it appears that the dressing is wet, then remove the dressing and dry the wound. If the dressing stays dry, for two days then you can remove it. If the dressing gets wet, make sure to dry it by blotting and blow drying. Keep fingers and hands off the wound. If you notice any advancing red zone, pus or other concerns please telephone the office promptly.
3. **MEDICATIONS:** Continue the medications, that you were taking, prior to surgery with four additions:
 - Ice. Although this is not a medication, use it frequently on your neck. This will be very helpful for the first week.I will prescribe:
 - Anti-inflammatory medication.
 - Muscle relaxant. This will be taken daily until you are seen in one month. This is for achy pain in the neck and can be taken on an as needed basis. If you do not like this, do not continue to take it.
 - Narcotic. This can be taken as needed for pain. The goal is not to be completely pain-free. It is important to achieve a balance between pain management and over-sedation from the narcotics. Most people discontinue narcotics after one week. There are side effects with narcotics which include drowsiness, sleepiness, itchiness, and difficulty with sexual activity. Do not use or handle sharp instruments while on narcotics.

Do not drive after you take a narcotic and while you are under the influence of narcotics. It is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

4. **ACTIVITY RESTRICTION:** I will direct your return to work issues separately. You can move your head within your neck pain tolerance in all directions. This movement will not damage the fusion. However, a major trauma could damage your neck. To limit that possibility, stay out of motor vehicles, as much as possible, for the first three months. When you are in a vehicle, make sure you have a shoulder belt and a headrest that hits you in the middle of the back of your head. Avoid; ladders, roofs, slippery surfaces, bicycles, motorcycles, ATV's, and skateboards. Any activity, where you might lose control, fall, or hit your head should be avoided. Lifting should be limited to 15 pounds or less and should be kept close to your body. Activity restrictions will be reviewed and updated at each clinic visit. If a collar given to you wear it for comfort, while riding in a car and / or as directed.