

LUMBAR SPINE DISCECTOMY / DECOMPRESSION / FUSION

DISCHARGE ADVICE

Pain relief:

- Take regular analgesia (painkillers) as prescribed for the first few days following your discharge, this is to keep on top of the pain or discomfort you may have, then take the analgesia as required for pain relief according to package instructions.
- Some analgesia may cause constipation, so it is important for you to prevent becoming constipated by ensuring you have a high fibre diet, plenty of fluids and do gentle exercise e.g. pottering around the house or going for short walks.
- If you do become constipated, you can get stool softeners or a mild laxative from your local pharmacy or GP.

Exercise:

- Remember to do your exercises as the Physiotherapist has shown you.
- If your Consultant wants to you use a brace or corset for support, do so as instructed by the Physiotherapist.
- Avoid twisting or bending your back.
- Ensure you logroll as you have been doing in hospital when getting in and out of bed.
- Avoid heavy lifting or strenuous exercise e.g. pushing a lawn mower, pegging out washing, lifting heavy washing, lifting or carrying heavy shopping bags, vacuuming for 6 weeks following your surgery.
- You can do gentle exercise e.g. walking. This encourages the circulation to your lower legs and helps prevent DVT.

TED Stockings:

- You should wear your TED stockings for 6 weeks following your surgery according to NICE guidelines.
- Get someone to help you change the stockings on a daily basis, you can hand wash them with soap and warm water and they dry relatively quickly.

Driving:

- Please check with your insurance for when you are covered to resume driving again following your surgery.
- You are advised NOT to drive for 6 weeks following your surgery unless your Consultant states otherwise.
- Ensure you are able to do an emergency stop safely before you start driving again.

Sutures / Clips:

- If you have sutures/clips that need to be removed, this is usually about 10 to 14 days post-operatively; you will be given an appointment for removal of sutures with the nurse in Outpatients at the Vale Hospital or Cardiff Bay Clinic.

- Alternatively should you chose to have your sutures/clips removed locally at your GP practice, you will be advised when this needs to be done.
- If your sutures are absorbable, they may take 7 to 10 days to dissolve, but any knots under the skin may take up to 21 days to dissolve completely.

Dressings:

- Dressings are to stay clean, dry and intact until removal of sutures / clips.
- If sutures are absorbable, leave dressings intact for 7 to 10 days, then remove dressings and leave the wound site open.
- Do not disturb dressings unnecessarily, only change them if the wound is oozing and there is a collection of fluid under the dressing, if water from your shower gets under the dressing or if the dressing is peeling off before it needs to be removed.

Follow-Up:

- You will be given an appointment to see your Consultant for follow-up before you are discharged.
- This is usually 3 to 6 weeks following your surgery
- Some Consultants require you to have a wound check at 2 weeks following your surgery even if you have absorbable sutures – if a wound check appointment is needed, this will be given to you before you are discharged together with your Consultant follow-up appointment.

Returning to work:

- Depending on the type of work you do will depend on how long you require off work. Discuss this with your Consultant.
- You need to see your GP for a fit-note before you return to work.

Seek medical advice if:

- Your wound site becomes red, hot, swollen or oozing.
- You are running a high temperature and feeling unwell in yourself.
- You are experiencing increasing levels of pain not controlled by taking regular analgesia that you were prescribed on discharge.
- You are experiencing numbness or loss of sensation, loss of power or unusual weakness to your lower limbs that you did not have prior to your surgery.

Should you have any concerns, contact the ward on **01443 44 9278**