

Dr. Zeiller's Post-operative Back Instructions

-You will receive a phone call from our office within the first week out of surgery to see how you are doing.

-Your first postoperative appointment will be at 2 weeks.

Incision care

-Use ice on the incision for 15 minutes out of every hour when you're awake for the first week out of surgery, this sounds like a lot but it's great for preventing swelling and pain. The second week you can go for 15 minutes out of every two hours.

-On your incision you may have either dermabond (super glue), mesh with super glue, Zip tie dressing, or staples.

-For the super glue or mesh with super glue you do not need to put any dressing over this after you shower, the glue is the dressing and has built in antimicrobial barrier to it.

-For the zip tie dressing or staples please use clean gauze with tape on the top and bottom edges for the first 5 days after surgery, after that time you can leave the staples and zip ties open to air.

Showering

-You may begin showering two days after surgery. If you went home with a gauze dressing from the hospital, remove the gauze and leave the under dressing (mesh, zip ties, staples) in place.

-You may get the incision wet with water only, please do not scrub the incision area.

-Gently pat dry when you're done and apply a fresh gauze if applicable.

-Do not submerge your incision (swimming, tub baths, hot tubs) for at least two weeks or when the incision is completely healed and looks like a scar.

Activity

-Do not drive for two weeks, this is due to keeping your spine alignment neutral and not twisting, also due to pain medications which can make you drowsy. You may be a passenger in the car.

-Try not to bend, twist, or lift more than 10 pounds the first 2 weeks after surgery.

-When sitting or lying down try to flip flop your feet back and forth to help prevent blood clots as well as try to get up and walk around every hour or so.

-Wear the brace when walking around and when riding in a car, you do not need to sit with brace on or sleep in it.

-If you notice swelling in your legs, elevate your legs when lying down or sitting and use compression stockings if possible.

Medications

-You will be sent home with a pain medication known as an opioid. These medications can cause you to be drowsy, possible nausea and vomiting, and constipation.

-For nausea/vomiting try to eat a bland diet including soups, applesauce, toast for the first few days after surgery.

-For constipation use stool softeners, laxatives, fiber supplements/powder, enemas, increase fluids with electrolytes as needed. You can use the recipe of 2Tbs melted butter, 4 oz warm prune juice, and 1 oz liquid milk of magnesia twice a day to help relieve constipation as well.

-You will also be sent home with a muscle relaxant, this is used for tightness and pain in the back and spasms, this medication can also make you drowsy.

-If you run out of pain medications before your first appointment please call our clinic a couple of days before you run out to allow time for us to refill the medication.

Normal events

-You may have a thin bloody or clear yellow drainage for a few days after surgery, this is normal. If the drainage increases, turns to more opaque consistency, or changes color and thickens to look like pus, please call us at the clinic.

-Not uncommon to have pain in the lower back and hip region due to the nature of the surgery, it's important to keep up with the ice packs for 15 minutes out of every hour when awake after surgery.

-Leg pain, weakness, or numbness may persist after surgery as the nerves are healing. If the pain becomes severe or you are unable to walk due to weakness call the clinic.

Emergencies

-If you notice shortness of breath or chest pain call 911!

-If you notice one leg is swollen, hot, red, and painful this may be a blood clot and may need to be evaluated by ultrasound at an emergency room, please call at the clinic if you notice any of these symptoms.