

### **Dr. Zeiller's post-operative neck 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.

-You will have mesh and super glue along your incision line, 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.

### **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 mesh 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 replace the cervical collar.

-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 neck 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 twist, turn the neck 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.

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

-Wear cervical collar when sitting upright and walking. Do not wear when sleeping unless more comfortable to do so.

### **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**

-It's normal to have some pain at the incision site, as well as pain in the posterior neck and shoulder region, it's important to keep up with ice on the incision site.

-Normal to have some difficulty swallowing the first few weeks after front of neck surgery, drink cool fluids and eat soft foods to help this.

-Arm pain, weakness, numbness may persist but let the clinic know if these symptoms seem to get worse after surgery.

### **Emergencies**

-If you notice difficulty breathing, 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.