



Houston MicroNeurosurgery

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Patient Instructions after Lumbar Fusion

Activity – You are required to wear a TLSO brace for 3 months after the surgery whenever you are out of bed. Do not wear the brace in bed. You do not have to put the brace on if you have to get up briefly at night to go to the bathroom. Walk as much as you can, as soon as you can after surgery. Do not lift anything heavier than 10 lb for the first 2 weeks, and nothing heavier than 30 lb for the first 3 months.

Pain Medications – You will receive prescriptions for pain medications upon discharge from the hospital. Take these medications only if you have pain. Try to reduce your intake of pain medications and get off them as soon as you can. You may take Tylenol instead of your narcotic pain medication. Do not take Tylenol with your pain medications, since most prescribed pain medications already have Tylenol in them. If you require a refill on your pain medication, call it in to the pharmacy and allow for a 24-hour turn-around time from our office. If you request refills on pain medications too frequently or for too long after the surgery, they may not be approved.

Other Medications – Take all your medications (except aspirin and blood thinners) as you were taking them before the surgery. You can take your aspirin starting 3 days after surgery. If you take a blood thinner such as Coumadin, make sure to ask Dr. Pakzaban about it.

Return to Work – You may return to a non-physical type of job whenever you feel well. Realistically, this is usually 4 weeks after the surgery. Note that you would still be wearing the brace at this time point. You must not drive or operate machinery if you are still taking pain medications. Those who perform physical work will have to discuss their work situation with Dr. Pakzaban on a case by case basis.

Driving – Do not drive for 2 weeks after the surgery. Do not drive while on pain medications. You may ride in a car as a passenger as soon after the surgery as you wish. If you go for a long trip in the first month after surgery, stop once an hour and walk around for 5 minutes.

Bathing – You may take a shower two days after surgery, but try to keep your lumbar incision dry for the first week. You can accomplish this by wrapping saran wrap around your back and belly or by buying and using water-proof bandages. After the first week, you can allow the water to run over your incision. You should not submerge your incision under

water (e.g. in a swimming pool or bath tub) until your incision has completely healed (about 3 weeks).

Care of Incision – You can remove your bandage when you go home. It is not uncommon to have small amounts of bloody drainage from the incision for several days after the surgery. If this is the case, replace your bandage with sterile gauze and paper tape once or twice a day until the drainage stops. You can clean your incision once a day with hydrogen peroxide, then cover it with an antibiotic ointment (such as Neosporin, or Bacitracin, or triple antibiotic ointment). If you do not have any drainage, you do not have to put a bandage back on, but you may do so if you wish.

Watch for Infection – Call us if you develop a fever greater than 101 degrees, or redness around the incision, or pus coming out of the incision. Have someone check your incision once per day. Some swelling and bruising around the incision are normal. A small amount of bloody drainage is OK, but large amounts of clear fluid or pus coming from the incision should be reported to Dr. Pakzaban immediately.

Follow-up Appointment – Call the office to arrange for a follow-up appointment soon after surgery. The first follow-up visit usually occurs within 7 – 10 days after surgery. This is a brief visit during which Dr. Pakzaban will check your incision, remove your staples, ask about your symptoms, review your drug intake, and answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

Call us during office hours for routine questions. For urgent problems, Dr. Pakzaban can be paged at nights and on weekends.

Have a good recovery.

Peyman Pakzaban, M.D.