

Wound Care

You will have absorbable sutures that will not need to be removed. You should not submerge the incision (bathtub, hot tubs, swimming pools, beach) for four weeks or until the incision is completely healed.

- If there is a post-op dressing and paper tape (“steri-strips”) on the incision, try not to remove the steri-strips. You may shower, but you’ll need to keep incision covered with a waterproof dressing. If the dressing becomes soiled or wet, you should change the dressing. If the dressing is clean and dry, it does not need to be changed. At two weeks, you will be able to get the incision wet.
- If there is skin glue (“derma-bond”) and no dressing, you may shower in 48 hours. You do not need to cover the incision with a dressing unless there is drainage. Do not let the shower water beat on the incision.

Activities & Driving

You are not permitted to drive for several weeks after surgery. You should also not drive if you are taking pain medications. We will discuss when you may drive again at your post-operative visit. Walking is good (and is the only exercise permitted after surgery), but take it easy. Limit bending, twisting, and lifting with the spine. You should not lift more than 10 lbs or the weight of about a gallon of milk.

- If your surgery was a laminectomy/laminotomy or discectomy, you may need to limit your activity for 6-12 weeks.
- If your surgery involved a fusion, you may need to limit your activity for several months.

What to Expect After Surgery

You should note progressive improvement of your pre-operative pain following your surgery. It is not unusual to experience some pain, numbness, burning, tingling, or other “funny” feeling following your surgery. If you notice complete relief of pre-operative pain following surgery, do not be alarmed if some of these sensations occur (you did not do anything wrong). Usually these sensations will lessen and mostly go away with time.

Bracing

- If you were provided with a cervical (neck) collar, you will need to wear it for six weeks following the surgery. You should wear it at all times except for meals and showering. When you take the brace off, it is good to gently range your neck to avoid stiffness.
- If you were provided with a lumbar brace, you do not need wear it in bed. You should wear the brace when you’re out of bed and active. Dr. Tseng will discuss whether to wear the brace all the time when out of bed or if the brace is for your comfort only.