

## Patient Pre-Op To Do's

- Pre-Op Labs (ex. blood work and urine sample)
- Provider Clearances
- Additional Imaging (ex. CT, MRI, Xray)
- Tobacco Cessation, including a nicotine test



## What Happens After Your Procedure?

- You will be admitting to an inpatient floor for recovery. The length of stay depends on your surgery.
- You will be given medications as needed for pain.
- You will continue to receive fluids and medications through an IV.
- Your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate and blood oxygen level will be monitored until the medications you were given have worn off.
- You will be taught how to move correctly, how to stand and walk after surgery. While in bed, you will be instructed to turn frequently without twisting the back, known as the log roll technique.

## Discharging From the Hospital

- Be sure to avoid excessive or repetitive bending, twisting, pushing, pulling, straining movements for at least six (6) weeks. **No lifting anything over 10lbs (The BLTs).**
- Walking is an important part of your recovery. Taking 2-3 walks a day, for 5-10 minutes at a time is a good starting point. As long as your pain allows is, we encourage you to increase either the time spent walking or the distance walked as tolerated.
- Nerve pain, numbness or tingling are common occurrences after surgery. It may take longer than expected for nerve symptoms to resolve. It can take weeks to months for nerves to heal after surgery.
- Depending on your needs after surgery, you will be discharged home with home health or a skilled nursing facility.
- For the first two (2) weeks after surgery, your pain level will likely be comparable to what you experience in the hospital. Icing your surgical site is a great way to manage pain, especially after longer walks. You can ice for 15-20 minutes, 4-5 times a day.

- Narcotic pain medications can cause constipation, but taking your prescribed stool softeners, walking often and staying hydrated are all great ways to manage this side effect.
- o If you don't have a bowel movement for 4-5 days, please call our office immediately.
- The dressing covering your incision will need to stay in place for five (5) days after surgery, as long as there is no drainage.
- o If the incision is draining, please change the dressing to keep it clean and dry.
- **Although uncommon, watch for signs and symptoms of infection including**
  - o **Redness**
  - o **Swelling**
  - o **Heat**
  - o **Fever**
  - o **Chills**
  - o **Purulent drainage**
- Five (5) days after surgery, you may shower as long as your wound isn't visibly draining. Let water run over your incision, do NOT scrub and pat dry. Do not apply any ointments or creams to your incision at any time, and avoid submerging (bathtubs, swimming pools or hot tubs) the incision for one (1) month.
- As you start to feel better, we encourage you to begin reducing your dose of narcotic pain medications. Depending on how long you have been taking pain medications, you may experience a few days of flu-like symptoms or irritability as you decrease your dose.
- **Do not drive for at least two (2) weeks and while you are still on narcotics. DO NOT drive while wearing a cervical collar.**
- Formal physical therapy usually doesn't begin for a while; at least six (6) weeks for non-fusion surgeries and three (3) months if your surgery involved a fusion. Until then, the best thing you can do is walk. There are no restrictions on how much or how far you can walk, but if walking increases your pain, you may want to decrease your time or distance.
- Your return to work depends on the type of work you do. People with desk jobs can return within weeks, although it may take time to feel comfortable sitting for an 8hr day. Bending, lifting and twisting restrictions stay in place for 6-12 weeks. If your job involves heavy labor, it will be 3-6 months before you can return to full work duty.

## **Follow Up Care**

- 2-3 weeks: Suture removal appointment (if applicable).
- 6 weeks: Appointment for exam, x-rays for fusion surgery, activity modification, off pain medication.
- 12 weeks: Appointment for exam, x-rays for fusion surgery, start formal physical therapy.

## **Forms can be faxed or emailed to:**

- (949) 348-1263
- disability@comg.com

## **For post op pain medication refills, questions or concerns:**

Call Lydia, Medical Coordinator (949)348-4017

Please allow for up to two (2) business days for medication refill requests. We do not provide refills over weekends or holidays. Please plan accordingly. You can request refills by calling (949)348-4017.

We expect most patients to be fully off narcotic pain medication between six (6) and twelve (12) weeks.

***After hours, weekends and holidays, call 949-348-4000, ask for the Orthopedic Provider on call.***