

Discharge Instructions After Lumbar Surgery

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1. Your surgical dressing will be removed about 48 hours after surgery. Keep incision clean and open to air. Your skin may have been closed with regular stitches, or subcuticular stitches which are buried under the skin. In the latter case you may notice small pieces of tape called “steri-strips” or skin glue called “Dermabond”. Let strips fall off naturally. If they remain on after two weeks, they may be removed by yourself or a family member. Skin glue will flake off on its own. Regular stitches need to be removed 7-10 days after surgery. If you don’t have an appointment prior to leaving the hospital, please call our office.
2. You may shower about 72 hours after surgery. Do not bathe. Use baby shampoo for the first 4 weeks after surgery. Do not swim until cleared by Dr. Bryniarski.
3. Avoid NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs; ex.: Motrin, Aleve, Advil, etc.) if you have had a fusion. Those medications hinder the process of fusion.
4. Restrictions: no lifting more than 10 lb., no smoking, no vigorous physical activity, do not bend, twist, or stretch. Most people are ready to return to light duty work by 4 weeks. Full time recovery may take much longer if you have had a fusion.
5. Do not drive for the first week after surgery or longer if you still take narcotic pain medications. Drive only when you can comfortably use the foot pedals.
6. Walking is an excellent type of exercise. It will speed up your recovery. Start slow at first, and gradually increase your activity and walking distance. You may require an assistive device such as a walker. Use it as needed to assist with safe walking, but try not to become dependent on it. You may also be fitted with a lumbar support brace, particularly after a fusion. Wear it when you are ambulating longer distances or in a vehicle. You do not need to wear it while in a chair, in bed, or in a shower.
7. You will be seen by Dr. Bryniarski in his office usually about three weeks after surgery. If you don’t have an appointment prior to leaving the hospital, please call our office. You may also require to have a post-op scan (XR-ray, CT or MRI) which will be arranged by Dr. Bryniarski’s assistant who will call you with the appointment.
8. Call our office when you develop: signs or symptoms of infection (redness, wound drainage, swelling, severe tenderness, severe back pain, fever > 101 F), new or worsening leg weakness or numbness, calf or leg swelling, tenderness, or redness.