

DANBURY HOSPITAL

POSTERIOR CERVICAL SPINE SURGERY

This is a list of instructions to assist you in your recovery following your neck surgery. These general instructions should be used as guidelines.

Post-operative Visit

- Make an appointment with your surgeon for a post-operative follow-up visit. This is usually 2 to 3 weeks after the surgery.
- You will discuss return to work with your surgeon
- The surgical procedure you had may have been performed in conjunction with another surgeon. Postoperative questions can be addressed with either surgeon. This team approach leads to better patient care and outcome.

Pain

- You will have some post-operative pain. Surgery on the back of the neck can be quite uncomfortable for several weeks after surgery.
- Ice is generally very helpful, placed over the back of the neck and shoulders.

Medication

- You will be discharged with prescriptions for pain medication and/or muscle relaxants.
- Sometimes, you may need a sleeping pill if it is initially hard to sleep.
- Check when your prescription is due to be refilled so that you don't run out. **On call or covering surgeons may not refill a prescription for pain medication.**

Collars

- After surgery, your neck may be supported by a soft cervical (neck) collar.
- The soft collar does not need to be worn all the time.
- Wear your soft collar for comfort or when riding in a car.

Bathing

- You can shower and wash your hair 24 hours following the surgery. You must keep the waterproof dressing intact so that the wounds (incision) do not get wet.
- There may be times your surgeon uses skin glue and there will be no dressing.

Dressings

- If you have dressings, you can remove the dressing by the 5th day after your surgery and leave the wound (incision) open to air.
- The stitches (sutures) we use most often do not need to be removed. They will dissolve by themselves over 6-8 weeks. Sometimes a small piece of dissolvable suture may remain in the wound and may even stick out through the wound. If this happens tell your surgeon at your office visit
- Sometimes your surgeon may use sutures or staples that will have to be removed. If you have staples, they need to be removed in 10-14 days.

Driving

- You can drive a car with a soft collar on.
- You can usually drive yourself 10 days after the surgery, if your neck feels comfortable.

Please call the office if you have any questions

Call us if you see any of the following:

- Increase in post-surgery pain,
- Fever higher than 101.5 degrees,
- Chills, drainage, swelling of the wound, or any redness of the wound. If there is drainage, note the color, amount and consistency.
- You are having headaches.