

Spine & Brain

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Postop Instructions for our SI Joint Fusion Patients

We appreciate that you have permitted us to provide your surgical care. Taking care of yourself after surgery is a key part of your recovery. This information is for our patients who have undergone SI joint fusion surgery. This information sheet is a general guideline to postoperative care, and we may provide you different or additional instructions as needed for you

ACTIVITY

After surgery you are to place minimal weight on the affected leg. To walk you will need to "toe touch" on the affected leg and use crutches or a walker. You are to use a walking aid until seen for your first visit.

Walking is the best form of exercise after surgery. We recommend walking several times a day. Start by walking in your home, and then progress to walking outside, or in a public place. Use your judgment as to how fast or far to walk and increase your pace and distance gradually.

Avoid lifting more than 10 pounds. At your first visit the restrictions will be adjusted by your surgeon. Ten pounds is approximately the weight of a gallon of milk.

We do not advise driving until all pain medication has been stopped and a vehicle can be safely controlled. If you feel unsafe to drive have someone else drive for you, Use your best judgment in this regard.

WOUND CARE

The incision may be covered with a dressing which should stay dry for the first 48 hours after surgery. Afterwards you may shower and leave the incision uncovered. While showering have the incision uncovered and let the water bounce off your skin. Afterwards blot the incision dry with a towel.

Your wound is closed by absorbable sutures. A layer of glue or steri-strips may be placed over the wound for additional support. Let the glue or strips fall off on its own. There may be swelling, redness, and pain at the wound site. This is common because muscles and connective tissue are moved during surgery in order to have access to your pelvis joint. The wound's pain and appearance will go away as the wound heals.

Do not submerge the wound under water (no hot tubs, no baths) until instructed by us. Do not apply ointments, creams, gels, or lotions to the incision since this can cause irritation or infection.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Some pain can be expected after surgery, and you may be given pain medication for this at discharge. Take your pain medication as directed. Do not take pain medications with alcohol or with illicit drugs.

Pain medication can cause side effects such as nausea, vomiting, and especially constipation. To minimize the likelihood of constipation, take the pain medications only when you need them for pain relief, and try to stay adequately hydrated and include foods with fiber in your diet, or fiber supplements. If there is an over-the-counter medication you have taken in the past for constipation, please feel free to try this. If your symptoms do not improve, you can consider talking to your local pharmacist for advice for other over-the-counter treatments, or your primary care provider, or contact us.

If you need a refill, please contact our office during regular business hours. Contact us 24-48 hours before you run out of your medication because this will give us adequate time to provide you with a refill. Prescription requests cannot be filed on the weekend. If a request is made on a Friday, this may not be available until the following week

DRIVING

Do not drive while under the effect of pain medication. The incision in your elbow could impair your ability to operate your vehicle. If you feel it is unsafe to drive, have someone else drive for you. You need to use your best judgment in this regard.

FOLLOW-UP CARE

You will be seen in our clinic 10-14 days after surgery. Our office usually makes this appointment for you when we schedule your surgery, but if you leave the hospital without one, please contact our office to schedule this.

If your appointment is already scheduled, please call the office to verify the time, date, and location since we have two office locations.

Contact us if you have other questions, or concerns. We would rather know how you are doing, and try to answer your questions or concerns, than have you be uncertain or worried about how you are doing.

If you experience emergent or urgent conditions call 911. Otherwise, please contact us at 715-843-1000 or through the patient portal at spineandbraingroup.com. Our office hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you were to call after hours, you will automatically be connected to our paging service

We hope this information is helpful and thank you once again for allowing us to provide your surgical care.