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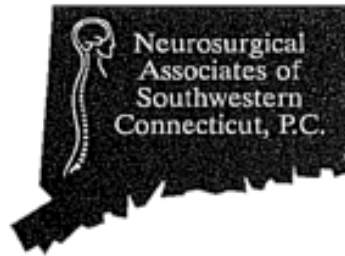
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Post-Operative Instructions Posterior Cervical Spine Surgery with Fusion

The following is a list of instructions, for your convalescence, following your neck surgery with fusion. These represent general instructions to be used as guidelines. They may be modified for an individual patient.

1. The surgical procedure you had may have been performed in conjunction with another surgeon. Post operative questions can be addressed with either surgeon. This team approach leads to better patient care and outcome.
2. You may have been given a hard or soft collar. The soft collar does not need to be worn all the time. Wear your soft collar at all times for comfort or when riding in a car unless you were instructed otherwise. Wear your heard collar all the time. It usually can be removed to shower but left on for sleep.
3. 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. It is recommended that you place ice over the back for 20 minutes 4 times per day.
4. You can shower and wash your hair 24 hours following the surgery. It is important to keep the waterproof dressing over the incisions so they do now get wet!
5. You can remove the dressing by the 5th post-operative day and leave the incision(s) open to air. The suture or stitches we use are absorbable and do not need to be removed. They will dissolve. Other times we use stitches or staples that will have to be removed. If you have Steri-Strips (white tapes covering the skin around your incision) then your stitches are under the skin and will dissolve. After the Steri-Strips get wet, they will curl up & fall off by themselves. If you have surgical glue let it slowly flake off rather than peeling it off. If you have stitches or staples that need to be removed
6. Your first post-operative visit with your surgeon is usually 2 to 3 weeks after the surgery.
7. You can drive a car with a soft collar on. Usually, it is safe to drive yourself 10 days after the surgery, if your neck feels comfortable. You cannot drive while wearing a hard collar.

8. Your return to work needs to be discussed with your surgeon.
9. You will be discharged with prescriptions for pain medication and/or muscle relaxants. Occasionally, you may need a sleeping pill if it is initially hard to sleep with the collar. Please call the office if you are in need of any prescriptions. Please be aware that prescriptions for narcotics will not be provided by a covering (on-call) surgeon.
10. Report any increase in post-operative pain, fever, chills, drainage, swelling of the wound, or any redness of the wound immediately. If there is drainage, note the color, amount and consistency. Also call us if you are having headaches. Do not hesitate to call if you any questions.
11. You will need to get an x-ray of your neck prior to your first post-operative visit with your surgeon. A prescription will be included in the surgical packet of information that is mailed to you prior to your surgery.