

# Discharge Instructions for Scoliosis Surgery



You have been diagnosed with scoliosis. Scoliosis is a condition that causes your spine to curve sideways. This problem is most often found in girls in their early teens. But boys and adults can have it, too. The exact cause is not known, but what is known is that it's not related to specific behaviors or activities such as carrying heavy bags or poor posture. You may be more likely to have it if someone in your family (a parent or a sibling) has scoliosis. You and your healthcare provider decided that surgery was the best way to treat your scoliosis. Here's what you need to know about home care after surgery.

## Incision care

- Check your incision daily. Or have someone check for you. Look for redness, tenderness, or drainage.
- Don't soak your wound in water until your healthcare provider says it's OK. This means no hot tubs, bathtubs, or swimming pools.
- Wait 3 days after your surgery to start showering. Then shower as needed. Carefully wash your incision with soap and water. Gently pat it dry. Don't rub the incision. Don't apply creams or lotions. To prevent falling while showering, use a shower stool.

## Other home care

- Take your pain medicine exactly as directed.
- Don't take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen or naproxen, unless your healthcare provider tells you to. They may delay or prevent correct fusion of the spine.
- Keep wearing the support stockings you were given in the hospital, as instructed by your healthcare provider.
- Wear your back brace as directed.

## Activity

- Arrange your household to keep the items you need handy. Keep everything else out of the way.
- Remove electrical cords, throw rugs, and anything else that may cause you to fall.
- Use nonslip bathmats, grab bars, an elevated toilet seat, and a shower chair in your bathroom.
- Free up your hands so that you can use them to keep balance. Use a fanny pack, apron, or pockets to carry things.
- Use chairs with arms to make it easier for you to stand up or sit down.
- Use a walker or handrails until your balance, flexibility, and strength improve. And remember to ask for help from others when you need it.
- Don't bend or twist at the waist or raise your hands over your head for the first 2 weeks after your surgery.
- Don't lift anything heavier than 4 pounds for 2 weeks after surgery.
- Don't sit for more than 30 to 45 minutes at a time. Take frequent short walks. Walking is key to your recovery.

- Don't drive until your healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Nap if you are tired, but don't stay in bed all day.

## Follow-up

- Make a follow-up appointment as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Keep all appointments. X-rays will be taken from time to time to check the healing of your spine.

## Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have any of the following:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Painful calf that is warm to the touch and tender with pressure

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider or seek medical care right away if you have any of the following:

- Drainage, redness, or warmth at the incision
- Fever of 100.4° F ( 38°C) or higher
- Shaking chills
- Weakness in your arms or legs or loss of bowel or bladder control
- Swelling of the foot, ankle, or calf that is not relieved by elevating your feet
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- Increased pain

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