

# Discharge Instructions for Laminectomy



A surgeon removed a piece of bone from the back of your spine called the lamina. This procedure is called laminectomy. Its purpose is to relieve the pressure caused by a bulging disk, ligament, cyst, tumor, or bone that painfully pushes on a nerve. Below are some care tips you can follow at home to help you feel better.

## Activity

- Don't push, pull, bend, or twist for the initial few weeks after your surgery. Your healthcare provider will tell you how to use your back safely after surgery. You can use a long-handled "grabber" to pick items up from the floor. You can also use an assistive device to help pull on your socks without bending. Ask your physical therapist about these items before you leave the hospital.
- Don't sit for more than 20 to 30 minutes at a time. And when you aren't sitting, lie down or walk.
- Walk as much as you can. You can walk outside or inside. If you use a treadmill, walk at a slow speed, with no incline. Hold on to the treadmill handrails while you walk. Be certain to turn the machine off before stepping off.
- Going up and down stairs is also good for you, so do it as much as possible. Don't lift anything heavier than 10 pounds until your healthcare provider says otherwise.
- Don't drive for 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery. And never drive if you are taking opioids or other pain medicines that can make you drowsy. Let others drive you instead. And limit car trips to 20 to 30 minutes at a time.
- Have someone remove electrical cords, throw rugs, and anything else in your home that may cause you to fall. If you have pets, make certain they are controlled or confined before you walk so they don't accidentally trip you.
- Arrange your household to keep the items you need handy.

## Home care

- Take your medicine exactly as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Check your incision daily for redness, tenderness, or drainage.
- Don't soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or pool until your healthcare provider says it's OK.
- Follow your surgeon's instructions on when you can start showering. This is usually 24 to 48 hours after surgery. Then shower as needed. After showering, gently pat the incision dry. Don't rub it or apply creams or lotions.
- For safety, use grab bars in the shower. Use a shower chair if you find yourself tired while showering.

## Follow-up

- Make a follow-up appointment as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Make an appointment to have sutures (stitches) or staples removed about 2 weeks after surgery.

## Call 911

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

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- A severe headache
- Trouble controlling your bowels or bladder
- Calf that is painful, warm to the touch, and tender with pressure

### **When to call your healthcare provider**

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Pain, redness, or drainage from the incision that gets worse
- Fever of 100.4° F ( 38°C) or higher, or as directed by your healthcare provider
- Shaking chills
- New pain, weakness, warmth, or numbness in your legs
- Foot, ankle, or calf swelling that does not get better after elevating your feet

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