



## Going Home After Spinal Surgery

Congratulations! You are ready to go home after your spinal surgery.

### **Can I do all of my regular activities?**

To allow your spine to heal, it is important that you follow these instructions until your first follow-up visit with your surgeon:

- DO NOT bend
- DO NOT twist
- DO NOT lift anything over 10 pounds (including children)
- DO NOT push or pull carts, strollers or any other object

### **How do I care for my incision (cut)?**

- If your incision (cut) is covered with gauze you must keep covered for 5 days.
- If the gauze gets dirty or starts to come off, you should remove it and replace it with a clean piece of gauze.
- After 5 days you can remove the gauze as long as the incision (cut) and the gauze are dry. You may notice a few small spots of blood on the gauze but there should not be a large amount of blood, discharge or liquid of any type or color coming from the incision (cut). If the incision (cut) or the gauze is wet, call your surgeon.

### **How will my stitches be removed?**

Your incision (cut) is closed with either staples, sutures (stitches) or Steri-Strips®.

- If you have staples or sutures (stitches) they will be removed by your healthcare team at your follow-up visit.
- Steri-Strips® should fall off on their own between 5 and 7 days after surgery. If not, they will be removed by your healthcare team at your follow up visit.

### **Can I get my incision (cut) wet?**

- DO NOT get your incision (cut) wet for 5 days after your surgery.
- You may take a shower 5 days after surgery.
  - Let the water run on your incision (cut) and gently pat dry.
  - DO NOT rub the incision (cut).
- DO NOT apply any lotions, soaps or powders to the incision (cut).
- DO NOT take a bath, soak or swim until your surgeon says it is okay.



**When do I need to see my surgeon for a follow-up visit?**

- It is important that you call your surgeon's office to schedule a follow-up appointment on the day you get home from the hospital.
- You will be seen by your surgeon within 14 days after you leave the hospital unless your doctor gives you different instructions.

**Call your surgeon immediately if you:**

- have a fever of 100.5°F or higher.
- have chills.
- are sweating in your sleep.
- have liquid draining from your incision (cut).
- your incision (cut) opens.
- have new pain.
- suddenly feel weak.
- suddenly cannot control your bowel movements or urination (peeing):
  - cannot make it to the bathroom on time.
  - do not know you have to go.
- have any other unusual symptoms.

**IMPORTANT:**

- If you had a fusion, DO NOT take aspirin or any other NSAID (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory) including Motrin<sup>®</sup>, Aleve<sup>®</sup>, Advil<sup>®</sup>, Naprosyn<sup>®</sup> for 3 months.
- If you stopped taking blood thinners such as aspirin, Plavix<sup>®</sup> or warfarin (Coumadin<sup>®</sup>) before surgery, speak with your primary care doctor about when to start this medicine again.

Thank you for joining us at NYU- Hospital for Joint Diseases. We wish you a healthy recovery.