



KEIPER SPINE™

After Care Instructions to Optimize Recovery – Dr. Carmina Angeles

It is not uncommon for pain to wax/wane over a 3-6 weeks after decompression surgeries and 3-6 months for fusion surgeries before leveling out.

PLEASE BE PATIENT WHILE YOU'RE HEALING.

- Allow discomfort/pain to guide your activity level within the guidance provided.
- At your 1 month follow up we will discuss Physical Therapy for rehabilitation; *if you do not have a place in mind where you would like to go, we encourage you to start looking at place close to home and engaging local family/friends for recommendations.*

ACTIVITY:

WALK, WALK, Walk! The more you are up and moving the better you will **DO** in recovery. It keeps the blood flowing to the surgical site as well as keeping your muscles warm and loose.

- DO** walk four times or more a day as tolerated.
- DO** use heat on sore muscles away from your surgical site. Suggested use-20 minutes every hour.
- DO** use ice on your incision and sore muscles. Suggested use-20 minutes every hour. Alternate with heat.
- Ok to use stairs, as long as you walk slowly, with a handrail or other support.
- DO NOT** exceed restrictions.
- DO** be aware that it is common for pain to **INCREASE** post-operatively due to the surgery itself.
- DO** change positions approximately every 15 minutes to avoid stiffness and muscle spasm.

RESTRICTIONS

- DO NOT** lift /push/pull/carry more than 5-10 pounds (i.e. gallon of milk) for 1 month. IF doing well with the above may progress slowly to 20 pounds the following month and to 30 pounds the next.
- DO NOT** soak. No baths, pools, hot tubs etc.
- DO NOT** smoke, or expose yourself to second hand smoke, this will affect your fusion.
- DO NOT** take anti-inflammatories/NSAIDs (list included) this will affect your **fusion** for **6 MONTHS AFTER SURGERY**. **If you DID NOT have a fusion, okay to take NSAIDs after surgery.**

Low back surgery patients:

- DO NOT** bend or twist, lift /push/pull/carry more than 5-10 pounds (i.e. gallon of milk) for 1 month. Bending at the waist is to be avoided; this place your lower back at increased risk of injury. Bending with the legs or squatting is okay but best if deferred until you begin Physically Therapy to assist with flexibility, strength, and proper body mechanics.
- (Fusion patients) DO** have your brace on at all times (**EXCEPT** while in bed, if getting up in the middle of the night for bathroom trips, and in the shower).
- DO NOT** stop wearing your brace unless instructed to do so.
- DO** have at least one article of clothing between your brace and skin to prevent rubbing.
- DO NOT** sit or stand longer than 30 minutes.
- Avoid anti-inflammatories until you are fully fused (these impair bone healing), if you no longer need post op pain medication, Tylenol should be used unless you are allergic or have known liver disease/impairment.



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Neck surgery patients:

- DO NOT** do any repetitive overhead movements.
- Avoid overhead activities that require you to look up and put your neck in extension; best to defer this activity to avoid pain until we begin Physical Therapy and start improving our neck range of motion.
- (**Fusion patients**) **DO** wear your brace in a vehicle and while your body is in motion. The soft collar can be worn at night time for comfort.
- Avoid anti-inflammatories until you are fully fused (these impair bone healing), if you no longer need post op pain medication, Tylenol should be used unless you are allergic or have known liver disease/impairment.

WOUND CARE:

- You can remove the bandage 3 days after surgery, **BUT** leave the steri-strips on until they fall off on their own. -
- You are allowed to take a shower as well and clean incision with just soap and water. **DO NOT** let water run directly on the incision. Keep the incision clean and dry **DO NOT** use any ointments.
- Avoid submerging: do not soak, no tubs/baths, pools, ponds, lakes, etc. until after your 1 month postop appointment.
- Staples can be removed no earlier than 14 days after surgery; typically, we will arrange for this to be done in our office by a MA or the PA.
- If you experience leg swelling that fails to improve with elevation and/or walking, particularly if limited to one leg with associated redness and pain, contact the clinic immediately as this could be concerning for a blood clot.

Pain Medications:

- We will cover your pain medication refills for 6 weeks after surgery. **Each fill is only 6-day prescription at a time.**
- Anticipate having a plan in place for medications beyond this time with your PCP or we can assist with referrals for Pain Management if not already being followed.
- Please contact the clinic for pain med refills; this way we can ensure prescriptions are filled before being out of your medication.
- Pain medications are **NOT** refilled on FRIDAYS OR OVER THE WEEKEND.
- Thus we encourage you to be pro-active and keep track of your pills to ensuring a 2-3day supply is always on hand.
- If you experience side effects from your medication(s), avoid further doses, and contact the clinic immediately.
- Do not abruptly discontinue narcotics. These should be gradually tapered to avoid withdrawal symptoms.
- Prescription medications are to be used only by the person for whom they are prescribed.
- Medications should be stored in a safe place out of reach of children.
- Many narcotic prescriptions are only valid for 3-6 months depending on the class schedule; we recommend you verify your medications with the pharmacy. If you are in possession of meds or continue to take meds without a valid prescription you can be held liable by your employer and or law enforcement.
- We encourage unused meds be turned into the pharmacy and/or local fire/law enforcement departments.



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Constipation: *not uncommon with pain medication*

Sennoside-Docusate – often prescribed post op

Miralax – available OTC

Magensium citrate – available OTC, recommend taking ½ bottle, if no bowel movement in 2 hours may repeat

-If these fail to improve contact the clinic for further guidance.

Driving:

-Avoid driving if you are under the influence of medications.

-Neck fusions should be weaned off their brace before driving.

-Start with small trips in and around town; may increase time/distance as tolerated.

-Maximize use of mirrors and or co-passenger for blind spots; avoid excessive turning of neck and torso.

-Attempt to avoid busy intersections, turn with traffic as opposed to against it, etc.

Follow Up Appointment Schedule: *approximations*

1 month post op with the PA, 3-4months, 6 months and 1 year follow up with Dr. Angeles.

*If you had a fusion you will need to arrive 20 minutes early to ensure X-rays are obtained

Questions(s)/Concern(s):

-MAs are available during normal office hours to assist, if they are uncertain the PA will be notified; during the normal work week it is reasonable to expect a return within 24-48hrs for non-emergent issues.

-**After hours/Weekends/Holidays:** A Neurosurgical PA will be available – please be prepared to remind us of your surgeon, the type of surgery, and date of surgery.

The office phone number: 541-485-2357