



Discharge information following your cervical spine surgery

Date of Discharge	
Date of Follow-up Appointment	

Surgical wound and dressing

Following your surgery, the wound on your neck has been closed with clips. The dressing covering this must stay in place for 10-12 days. Please make an appointment to see the nurse at your GP surgery to have the staples removed 10-12 days following the date of your surgery. Avoid getting the dressing wet when you wash/shower. Please ring the Spinal Nurse or Ward if you are concerned regarding the following:

- Increased pain around wound
- Increased swelling/redness
- Wound oozing/leakage from dressing
- Temperature over 38 degrees/feeling feverish

Pain

It is normal to experience some pain and discomfort following your surgery. It is important that you take pain relief medications given to you on discharge from hospital. The symptoms in your arms may fluctuate for around 6-8 weeks following surgery. This is because of swelling and nerve irritation. If you have severe pain, pain that is not normal to you or new loss of sensation/weakness please contact the Spinal Nurse. If you were taking anti-neuropathic medication (for example, gabapentin, pregabalin or amitriptyline) before surgery it is important not to stop this suddenly. However, please speak to your GP regarding being weaned off these medications.



Exercise/Lifting:

It is important to mobilise following your surgery to aid your recovery and prevent blood clots in your legs known as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). You can gradually increase your walking distance each week. We would advise you to get up regularly to go for a walk indoors. Once you feel more confident and your pain is controlled you can begin to go for walks outdoors. Please continue to follow any advice and exercises given to you by the physiotherapists who saw you during your stay in hospital. It is important that you do not do any heavy lifting in the first few weeks following surgery. We would advise against any recreational activities, such as swimming or sports, for a minimum of 6 weeks. We will be able to advise you at your follow-up appointment regarding any specific activities you may wish to restart.

Driving/Returning to work:

It is advised that you avoid driving in the first 2-4 weeks of your recovery. If you have no loss of sensation, weakness in your arms and can move your neck freely then you may restart to drive so long as you feel confident to do so. We would advise you initially to take up to 4 weeks off work to allow recovery from your surgery. If your job involves heavy lifting/strenuous activity, then we may advise you to be off for up to 8 weeks. Your return to work can be discussed when you attend your 6 week follow-up appointment. The hospital can provide you with a sick certificate, however if you need an extension of this please discuss with your GP.

Useful contact details

Spinal Nurse Specialist: 07818 535042 (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm)

Mercers Ward: 020 7288 5481 (if unable to contact Spinal Nurse or require out of hours advice)

Clinic 1B: 020 7288 3799/5689

Consultant's Secretary: 020 7288 3310 or 020 7288 3427



Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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