



# Davis Spine & Orthopaedics

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## Cervical Disc Replacement Discharge instructions

### When to call 911:

- **If you are experiencing shortness of breath or chest pain, CALL 911**
- **If you are having swallowing problems that interfere with your ability to breathe call 911 and go to the ER. You MUST also contact the office to make us aware of your trip to the ER, we have no other way to know you are there.**

### When to call the office: (even if it is after hours – call before going to the ER)

- **If your temperature exceeds 101.5° F**
- **If your incision begins to separate**
- **If your incision begins to drain more that it did at your time of discharge. If you have drainage that is soaking through your dressing after one hour**
- **If you have an increase in pain, swelling or redness around the incision**
- **If you have difficulty controlling your bowel or bladder (not constipation, the opposite)**

### Discomfort:

- After surgery, pain is managed with Celebrex 200mg once daily. In addition, narcotic medication is sometimes used. Because narcotic pain pills are addictive, they are used for a limited period (4 to 8 weeks). As their regular use can cause constipation, drink lots of water and eat high fiber foods. Laxatives (e.g., Dulcolax, Senokot, Milk of Magnesia) can be bought without a prescription. Thereafter, pain is managed with acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol).
- Hoarseness, sore throat, or difficulty swallowing may occur in some patients and should not be cause for alarm. These symptoms usually resolve in 1 to 4 weeks.
- It is usual to experience some continued neck and arm pain. This should progressively improve. Often, cramping pain or soreness is associated with increasing your activities too quickly. If this happens to you, try restricting your activities for a day or so which will often help dramatically. If there is a return of severe pain call the office.

### Restrictions:

- Use caution when looking side to side, avoid sudden or quick movement of your neck. Wear the soft neck brace that has been provided to you.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 8 pounds (e.g., gallon of milk). No overhead lifting.
- Do not drive for 2 weeks after surgery or until seen for your post operative check up. You may ride in a car, but avoid long trips until after you have returned for a follow up visit.
- Housework and yard-work **are not permitted** until the first follow-up office visit. This includes gardening, mowing, vacuuming, ironing, and loading/unloading the dishwasher, washer, or dryer.
- Postpone sexual activity until you are released from use of your soft collar.

### Activity:

- You may need help with daily activities (e.g., dressing, bathing), however, most patients are able to care for themselves right away.
- After following the above restrictions for two weeks, gradually return to your normal activities. Walking is encouraged; start with a short distance and gradually increase up to 1 to 2 miles daily.

### **Bathing/Incision Care:**

- You should change the dressing daily for about two weeks. **Do not apply any creams or ointments for the first 4-6 weeks.**
- Sutures are placed under the skin and will be absorbed by your body. There will be small pieces of adhesive tape superficially, which will be removed at your follow up visit if they have not fallen off.
- You may shower 5 to 7 days after surgery. The incision may get wet, pat it dry with sterile gauze. Once dry, cover with a dry sterile dressing.
- No tub baths, hot tubs, or swimming pools until you are told it's safe to do so.

### **Recovery and prevention:**

We will see you for follow up 2 weeks after your surgery. Recovery time generally lasts 4 to 8 weeks with improvement each week. We will discuss the type of work you do at your follow up visits and we will decide together when to release you back to work.

### **After 2 weeks:**

- You may resume sexual activity, initially as a passive participant and progress to activity as tolerated.
- You may increase lifting to 15 lbs