Post-Operative Instructions: Posterior Cervical Fusion

Follow-up appointments:

2 weeks 6 weeks 3 months
6 months 1 year 2 years

Discharge:

4-5 days

Staple/Stitch Removal:

At the first post-op visit (approximately 1-2 weeks).

Medications:

Pain medications and muscle relaxants will be prescribed on an individual basis.
Prescriptions will be filled during office hours only. Please allow 72 hours for requests to be processed.
No anti-inflammatories for a minimum of 3 months post-op.
Resume home medications per discharge instructions.

Physical Therapy:

In the hospital, this will begin on post-operative day 1.
As an outpatient, this may be prescribed approximately 6 weeks post-op.
A home exercise program may also be prescribed.

Cardiovascular Exercise:

Walk at least 30 minutes per day (does not need to be all at once) at the time of discharge.
Walking is the most important activity. Do as much as is comfortable.
From 2 weeks through 6 weeks following surgery, you should be able to increase your activity to normal.

Collar:

A collar should be used at all times for the first 6 weeks following surgery.
The soft collar should be used while in bed.
The hard collar should be used while out of bed.
A third collar may be given to be worn while showering.

Driving:

None for 4-6 weeks post-operatively.
No sitting in one position in the car for longer than 45 minutes- get out and stretch if the ride is longer than this.
No driving while using narcotic pain medications.

Sleeping:

Use a pillow between the knees and lying on your side, or a pillow below the knees and lying on your back
The soft collar should be used while sleeping.

Showering:

You may begin showering 72 hours following surgery.
Do not soak the wound and keep it dry.
Change the dressing after showering, while leaving the steri strips in place.
Do not scrub incision site.
No baths, walk-in shower only.

Lifting:

No lifting over 10 lbs for 6 weeks.
No bending of the neck and no lifting above the level of the shoulders for 6 weeks.

Housework:

Light duties only.
Avoid pushing and pulling.
No bending over.
Sexual Activity: Wait until 6-8 weeks post-op, once pain has subsided. Use comfortable positions.