

LUMBAR

DR. REMI NADER'S POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS



Caring for Your Incision Site

While at home: **KEEP THE WOUND CLEAN AND DRY AT ALL TIMES.**

YOU SHOULD CHANGE THE BANDAGE DAILY as follows:

- Remove bandage with clean gloves or freshly washed hands.
- Reapply a fresh clean/sterile bandage.
- Do not pick at the scab, as this may cause scarring and/or bleeding.

Cover the wound with a water proof bandage if you want to shower during the 2 weeks following surgery, (a Zip-loc bag securely taped to a margin of 2-3 in. around incision site is a good substitute).

You may remove the bandage to shower as usual after the first 2 weeks, but do not soak the area in water (no tub baths, hot tubs, or swimming) until the sutures are removed. You may resume swimming / soaking activities 2 weeks after your sutures are removed provided that the wound is completely closed.

If sutures or staples are in place, it is important to keep your appointment for removal.

If Steri-Strips were applied, they will usually fall off by themselves after 10-12 days.

Bracing After Surgery

When you are released from the hospital, Dr. Nader **may** order a lumbar support brace. Some patients find braces uncomfortable, but they serve a very important purpose. Braces are used to limit mobility and support the spine. Our patients are often concerned that excessive use of such a corset might weaken the lumbar muscles. If you use the brace constantly, this will likely occur. For this reason, Dr. Nader does not recommend continuous, daily use of a lumbar corset. Rather, we suggest its use in a "task specific" manner.

The brace should be employed when you are involved in activities that place your back at risk (such as working, housekeeping, exercise, walking, etc.). When this "at risk" activity is finished, the brace may be removed.

The brace will also offer a gentle reminder that motion must be limited for healing to occur. The purpose of the brace is not for complete immobilization. As such, feel free to use the lumbar corset when it helps. We recommend that initially the brace be used whenever you are out of bed for more than 15 minutes.

Medications & Pain

You may have pain for a few days after surgery.

You **may** receive prescription(s) that could include:

- A pain medication such as Tramadol or Acetaminophen/ codeine (Tylenol #3) or sometimes a stronger narcotic if necessary
- A muscle relaxer such as cyclobenzaprine or tizanidine
- A medication that helps with nerve pain such as gabapentin or pregabalin

Tell your surgeon if you are allergic to any of these medications

Take the muscle relaxer and medication for nerve pain along with tylenol if needed, first to relieve the pain.

Add the pain medication prescribed only if your pain is not relieved by the above medications

General directions

You can be a passenger in a car, but you cannot drive at least until your follow-up appointment.

You may feel more tired after your surgery, so rest.

Avoid heavy lifting, strenuous activities or any contact sports until your surgeon allows you.

In general, **YOU SHOULD NOT SIT OR STAND FOR MORE THAN 20 MINUTES AT A TIME.**

Generally, patients return to work whenever they feel able to increase their activities. However, your surgeon should confirm the time for your return to work.

You must **AVOID LIFTING HEAVY OBJECTS, NO MORE THAN 5 POUNDS** and you should not bend or twist your back excessively.

Call your doctor

if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Your incision becomes excessively warm, red, or you see pus or any drainage other than blood spotting coming from it.
- Increasing pain, weakness or numbness in your legs.
- Trouble breathing.
- Severe headache that will not go away.
- New problems controlling your bowel movements or bladder (urine).
- You cannot drink fluids or keep them down.
- Fever above 101.3°F or shaking chills