

## **HOME CARE AFTER LUMBAR DISCECTOMY**

### **ACTIVITY**

- You can climb **stairs** just try not to over-do it.
- **Sleep** either on your back, stomach or side. You may use pillows for support placed behind your back or between your legs.
- Do not sit for more than 30 minutes at a time.
- It is important to begin a **walking** program once you leave the hospital.

Day 1 (at home): Walk 1 block in the morning and 1 block in the afternoon/evening.

After Day 1: Increase your distance 1 block per day as long as it is comfortable. You should be walking 1-2 miles per day when you return for your next visit.

**NOTE:** If you need to lift or pick up an object (less than 5 pounds) from the floor, squat with your knees bent; do not bend at the waist.

### **LIMITATIONS**

- No **driving** for 3 days or while on narcotics. You may be a passenger in the car, but limit rides to 30 minutes.
- No **lifting** more than 5 pounds for the first 2 weeks. No lifting over 25 pounds for 4 additional weeks (6 weeks total)
- No sports activities (except the walking program) until after your first post-operative visit.
- No sexual activity for 1 week, after that if comfortable while lying on your back.

### **RETURN TO WORK**

Your return to work will depend on your recovery and the type of work you do. You must discuss this with your doctor before you return to work



## **INCISION CARE**

Caring for your incision at home is important to prevent infection. Please follow the steps below on incision care:

- You may remove your **dressing** 2 days after your surgery. If your incision is no longer draining, it is preferred you leave your incision open to air. You can cover your incision with a dry dressing if this is more comfortable, but you should change this dressing daily.
- You may **shower** 3 days after your surgery. No direct water pressure over the incision, but water can hit the top of you back and roll over the incision. Pat dry with a clean towel. No tub soaks.
- Your incision has been closed with suture material under the skin and covered with steri-strips (small pieces of surgical tape) on the skin. The steri-strips will gradually peel off as they get wet when you take a shower. This is normal and expected.

## **PAIN MANAGEMENT AT HOME**

You may have an occasional increase in the low back, leg pain and/or numbness after surgery during the healing phase. This is normal and is caused by inflammation (or swelling) of tissue in your low back. To reduce the pain, there are several approaches to try:

- Avoid sitting more than 30 to 60 minutes at a time for the next 48 hours.
- Decrease your activity for the next 1-2 days.
- Take the pain medicine as directed by the doctor. You may take over the counter anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, Motrin®, Advil®, Aleve®) as instructed on the bottle. You can take Tylenol to help with pain control if the narcotic medication you were prescribed does not also contain Tylenol/acetaminophen.

Narcotic pain medicine causes constipation. Eat plenty of foods with roughage (bran, oat, fruit, applesauce) and drink a lot of fluids, especially prune juice to prevent constipation. You can also take over the counter stool softeners such as Colace as needed.

You will be given a prescription for pain medication after your surgery. We anticipate you will no longer require narcotic pain medications 1-2 weeks post operatively.



### **FUTURE FOLLOW-UP VISITS**

**1<sup>st</sup> post op appointment:** This usually occurs 1 to 2 weeks after your surgery date. **Call Dr. Mazahery's office to confirm the date and time** of your first post operative appointment. **703-810-5202**

### **CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING**

1. A temperature of 101 F (38.3 C) or greater on 2 readings taken 4 hours apart
2. An increase in pain, redness or swelling around your incision.
3. Drainage from your incision.
4. Develop difficulty urinating or controlling your bowel movements.
5. Increased swelling in your ankles or feet.
6. Increasing weakness of your legs
7. Redness, warmth and tenderness on the back of the calf on your lower leg

### **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

Dr. Mazahery's office: (703) 810-5202, Monday through Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

For emergencies on nights and weekends, please call (703) 810-5202 and have the on call provider paged. You will need to leave your number and the doctor will call you back shortly.