

Postoperative Back Surgery Quick Reference Guide

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Pain Management:

- Take pain meds when pain level reaches level 4/10.
- Take pain meds only if needed and as prescribed.
 - If Fusion Surgery: Do not take any NSAIDs (Advil/Motrin, Aleve/Midol/Naprosyn).
 - If Lumbar Disc Replacement (LDR)/Decompression Surgery: NSAIDs are OK.
- Call clinic for refill 2 days before running out.

Activity:

- Work up to walking 1 hour/day in the first 6 weeks after surgery.
- Start with several short walks (5-10 min) during the day.
- Use walker or cane if unsteady and have someone walk with you.
- Avoid bending, lifting, twisting for 8 weeks if you had decompression surgery.
- Avoid bending, lifting, twisting for 12 weeks if you had fusion surgery.
- No lifting > 10 lbs (1 gallon of milk is approximately 8lbs).
- Brace when out of bed
 - For 6 weeks for Lumbar Disc Replacement (LDR)/Decompression.
 - For 12 weeks for any Fusion Surgery (ALIF/LLIF/TLIF).

Nutrition:

- Eat high protein diet to facilitate wound healing (Ensure 3x/day)
- Take OTC Calcium 500mg 2x/day and Vit D3 1000 IU daily.
- Take OTC Vit C 1000 mg/day and Zinc 25 mg/day to promote wound healing.

Wound:

- Keep dressings clean, dry, and intact.
- You may shower (dressing is water resistant), cover with plastic/shower protector.
- Do not submerge dressing (no bath/pools/hot tubs).
- Do not remove/change dressings (unless heavily saturated/soiled/wet).
- Do not apply any lotions/oils/ointments/home remedies to the incision until healed.
- Incision should be completely healed in ~3 weeks.
- Underlying muscle and soft tissue may take another ~8-12 weeks to heal.
- If sent home with a drain, it will be removed by Home Health or in clinic.
- If sent home with incisional wound vac (Prevena), charge nightly, shuts off on its own (~7 days). Do not remove, ok to shower, no soaking. If it alarms or shuts off, call office.
- If worsening pain, swelling, drainage, fever, chills, contact clinic immediately.

ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, CALL CLINIC ANY TIME