

Home care instructions *P. Ronjon Paul, M.D., Nicholas Mataragas, M.D.*

This handout will review the care you need to follow once you are home. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask your nurse or doctor. Our staff is here to help you. If you have questions after you are at home, please call the numbers listed at the end of this handout.

activity

- 1 You do not need to wear your TED stockings (heavy white elastic stockings) at home.
- 2 You can climb stairs just try not to over-do.
- 3 You may shower 3 days after your surgery day, but keep your Incision covered with plastic. Avoid tub baths for the first 4 weeks after surgery and hot tubs/swimming for 6 weeks.
- 4 Sleep either on your back, stomach or side. You may use pillows for support placed behind your back or between your legs.
- 5 It is important to begin a walking program as soon as you leave the hospital.
- 6 You may sit for any length of time based on your comfort level. For your comfort, you should change your position every hour. If you become uncomfortable, change your position or activity.

walking program

This is just a guideline.

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 10 lbs) from the floor, squat with your knees bent, do not bend at your waist.

limitations

- No driving for 3 days or while taking narcotic pain medication. However you may be a passenger
- No lifting more than 10 lbs (about 1 gallon of milk) for the first 6 weeks.
- No sports activities (except the walking program) until after your first follow-up visit.
- No sexual activity for 1 week, after that if comfortable while lying flat 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:

- If you have a dressing over your incision, you may remove it when at home unless otherwise instructed by a nurse or a doctor.
- 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.
- Take your temperature twice a day for 1 week.

call your doctor if you have any of the following:

- A temperature of 101 degrees F (38.3 degrees C) or greater on 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- An increase in pain, redness or swelling around your incision.
- Clear drainage from your incision.
- Increase in drainage from the incision.

pain management

It is not unusual after surgery, during the healing process to experience occasional pain, numbness, tingling or weakness in your back or legs. If you experience pain once you have returned home, there are several things you can do to try to decrease the pain. First use ice and try decreasing your activity for 1-2 days.

Ice Method

If you have been provided a cooling device, use it while in bed or sitting. Ice the area for 20 minutes every hour for 4 consecutive hours (especially in the evening). Do not put the ice directly on your skin. Use a ready-made ice pack or put ice in a plastic bag and then wrap pack or bag in a towel before you use it. You may also need to use pain medicine. If you do need pain medicine, take the medicine you were prescribed as directed. Do not increase the pain medicine dosage without first contacting your doctor or nurse. If you were not given a prescription, you can take Tylenol, or an anti-inflammatory pain medicine such as Ibuprofen, as long as you do not have a history of gastric (stomach) or peptic ulcer disease, kidney/liver disease or bleeding problems. Eventually you should no longer need to use pain medicine. However, if your pain persists or you have no control over your bowel or bladder you should call the clinic as soon as possible.

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future follow-up visits

1st Post-op visit: call 630 967 2225 to make your first post-operative appointment at the Spine Clinic if not already made. This usually occurs 2 weeks after your surgical date. All other follow-up visits will be as directed by your physician.

medications

If you need a prescription filled:

Because your health condition may change over time, your doctor or another provider who has access to your confidential medical records reviews refill requests. By following these simple guidelines, you will avoid any delay in getting your prescription refilled.

- 1 Contact your pharmacy at least 5 days before your prescription requires refilling. To protect your health, pharmacies will accept refill orders only from your doctor. So, when you call DuPage Medical Group with your request an additional step is added. Your prescription will be filled faster if you call your pharmacy directly, they will then contact DuPage Medical Group.
- 2 *Use the same pharmacy.* That way, your pharmacist will have your complete prescription records and you avoid the danger of mixing medications. To make it convenient for you DuPage Medical Group will work with the pharmacy of your choice. Please choose one pharmacy, and use only that pharmacy. It is an easy way to help protect your health.
- 3 Call your pharmacy early in the day. This gives your doctor time to review your records. To ensure you get the right medications, we do not rush refills without making sure the order and your record are reviewed. Often, physicians are in surgery or finishing with patients late in the day, and we do not want to interrupt those patients' visits, therefore, refill requests received after 3 pm Monday through Thursday or after 10 am Friday will be reviewed and filled the next DuPage Medical Group business day.

If you run out of medication before you request a refill

Always call your pharmacy at least 5 days before you run out of medication. This will give the pharmacy plenty of time to contact your doctor, for the doctor to review your record, and for the pharmacist to prepare your medication. All you have to do is watch your medication levels and there should be no reason for you to run out of medication. It is dangerous to "rush" an order. For your protection, refills are not done at night, over the weekend, on holidays or as an emergency if you have forgotten to call your pharmacy.

If you run out of your medication early

Your doctor ordered your prescription according to a precise dosage for a prescribed amount of days. If you run out early, it may mean you are experiencing some difficulty with your dosage or medication. Call DuPage Medical Group immediately and explain your difficulty.

If your prescription is lost, misplaced or stolen:

To protect your health, lost or stolen prescriptions are replaced only with a physician visit. To avoid possible duplication of prescriptions when an order is lost or stolen, you will want to talk with your doctor. Call DuPage Medical Group to schedule an appointment.

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DuPage Medical Group Spine Center 630 967 2225