



## **Michael E. Steinhaus, MD**

*Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery*

The Spine Institute

5770 S. 250 E. #135

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### **Minimally Invasive ALIF Postoperative Instructions**

Congratulations! You're through surgery. Now it's time to recover. Below is a list of instructions for care at home.

#### **Incision:**

- Keep the dressing/incisions clean and dry. You may shower when you get home. Avoid direct water pressure to the dressing and do not submerge in water such as in swimming or bathing. If the dressing becomes wet, pat dry with a towel.
- Maintain your dressing for two weeks until your follow-up appointment. Your stitches are under the skin and will dissolve over time.

#### **Activity:**

- Avoid extremes of bending or twisting your back and avoid lifting anything more than 5 pounds (~half gallon of milk).
- We want you up and walking as much as you feel comfortable (around the house and even short walks outside the house)
- Try to avoid sitting or standing in one position for a prolonged period of time as this can cause you to be sore. If you anticipate having to do this (e.g. a long car trip or standing in place for a prolonged period), try to change positions and stretch every 30 minutes.
- Avoid any activities that involve increased pressure/strain to your back or abdomen.
- The ability to get back to driving varies based on the individual. To drive, you should feel comfortable at the wheel without pain and should have the ability to check your blind spot. You should not drive if you are taking any medications that would impair your ability (e.g. opioids, muscle relaxants). Prior to getting back on the road, we recommend practicing somewhere safe (e.g. empty parking lot) to ensure that you can drive safely.
- Avoid tobacco products which can inhibit wound and bone healing.
- Nutrition is key – eat well!

#### **When to call us:**

- Fever > 101F with redness and any pus from the incision
- Opening of the incision with significant drainage
- Concern for blood clot in the leg (increased pain, swelling, warmth/redness in legs or chest pain/shortness of breath)
- Any new or worsening neurologic changes (numbness, tingling, weakness, any change in balance, loss of bowel/bladder control)
- New onset positional headaches, clear drainage, nausea/vomiting
- Any issues with your stomach/abdomen, including worsening pain, distention
- Any other symptoms of concern



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### **Constipation**

- Decreased activity and the use of pain medications following surgery may lead to constipation
- Drink lots of liquids and eat foods high in fiber
- If you become constipated, you can take over-the-counter stool softeners such as Colace or laxatives such as Ducolax, MiraLax, and Metamucil.
- If having persistent constipation issues that have not resolved with over-the-counter treatments, you can try the following recipe:
  - ½ cup orange juice
  - ½ cup prune juice  
(heat combined juices in microwave to room temperature)
  - 2 Tablespoons Milk of Magnesia
  - 2 Tablespoons Magnesium Citrate
  - Wait 1 hour, if it does not work, take again
  - **DO NOT LEAVE THE HOUSE FOR AT LEAST 1 DAY**
- If any questions or if you experience abdominal fullness/discomfort please call the office