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Cervical Disc Replacement Postoperative Instructions

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

Incision:

- Keep the incision clean and dry. You may shower but avoid direct water pressure to the dressing and do not submerge in water such as swimming or bathing. If the dressing becomes wet at all, pat dry with a towel.
- Maintain your dressing for two weeks. Your stitches are under the skin and will dissolve over time. There is a layer of surgical glue over the incision which will slowly begin to peel off on its own. Do not try to peel it off yourself. If your dressing falls off before that time you can cover it with a small over-the-counter bandage. You can remove the dressing on your own at home at 2 weeks.

Activity:

- Avoid extremes of bending or turning your neck 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 maintain your neck in a neutral position. You may sleep however is most comfortable – on your side or on your back is okay. The first night sleep with your head propped up (i.e. in a recliner or with more pillows than normal).
- When to return to driving depends on the individual. Prior to getting back on the road, you should ensure that you are able to move your neck without discomfort and that you are able to check your blind spot. We recommend practicing somewhere safe (e.g. empty parking lot) to ensure that you are comfortable with some neck motion and that you can drive safely. Do NOT drive if you are taking any medications that would impair your ability (e.g. opioids, muscle relaxants)

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)
- Any other symptoms of concern