Health Facts for You

Home Care After Scoliosis Surgery

This handout is meant to act as a guide. You will come to the clinic for x-rays and followup at 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, and one year after scoliosis surgery, and then yearly for 4 to 5 years.

First 6 Weeks

Incision Care:

- The stitches will dissolve over time.
- You will be taught dressing changes before you leave the hospital.
- You will have Steri-strips (paper tape) across your incision. The Steristrips may fall off. This is ok. You may take them off after three weeks.
- Your scar is very sensitive to sun. Use extra sunscreen on your scar if you are outside.

Bathing:

- Sponge baths only for 3 weeks.
- After 3 weeks you may shower.
- After 4 weeks you can soak in a bathtub.

Activity:

- Walk, slowly increase the distance.
- Go up and down stairs.
- **Do not** lift more than 5 pounds.
- **Do not** twist, turn, or bend.
- **Do not** drive for 6 weeks after surgery, and you are no longer using narcotic pain pills.

6 Weeks to 3 Months

- Walk faster.
- Ride a stationary biking.

- Climb more stairs.
- Do light aerobics 3-5 times a week.

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- You may lift up to 10 pounds.
- Begin bending, twisting, and turning within your comfort zone. **Do not** lift anything when doing this.
- You may float in a pool or lake, but **no** swimming or diving.

3 to 6 Months

3 Months:

- Light straight ahead jogging on a flat surface.
- Light swimming.

4 Months:

- Increase the intensity of your jogging and swimming.
- Increase weightlifting to weights you can lift 15 times.

5 to 6 Months:

Resume your normal routines. Slowly increase your time in a new activity so you can adjust to how your body is able to move.

No activities that place a load on the back with the back bent (i.e. jet skiing, hopping waves, snow mobiling over jumps, etc.).

The point where the fused and unfused spine meets can be damaged.

Who to Call

Please talk with your doctor about your plan of care. For questions, please call: (608) 263-6420.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 6/2022. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#6091