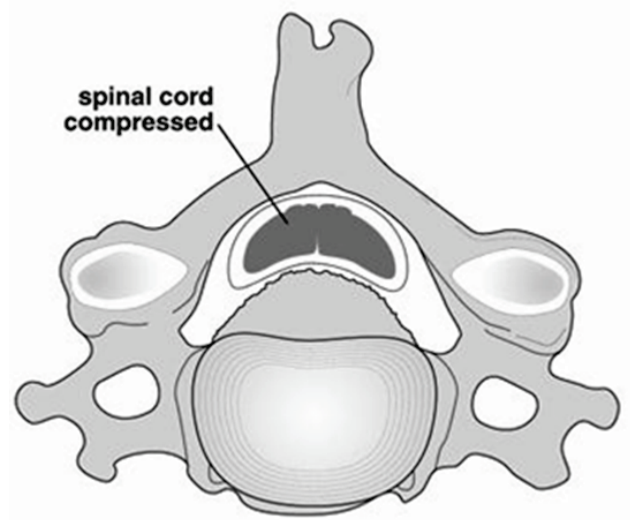
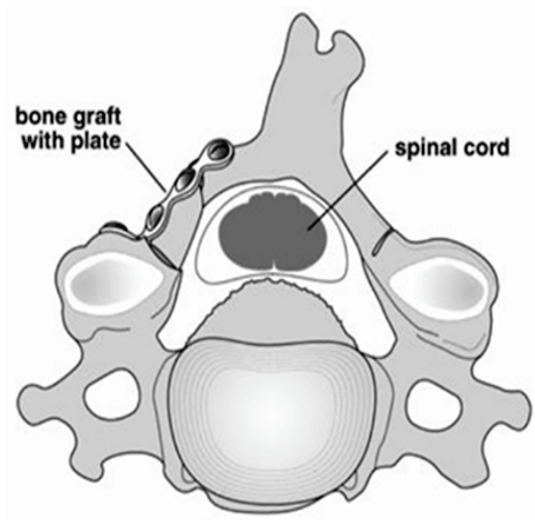


## Home Care Instructions after Cervical Laminoplasty Surgery

**Doctor:** \_\_\_\_\_

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.



### Cervical Collar

Your doctor may order a soft collar for you to wear after surgery. This helps support your neck and provide comfort.

### Bathing

- The first 5 days after surgery, the incision should remain dry and covered with the surgical dressing. You can bathe if the dressing remains clean, dry and secure.
- After 5 days, you may gently remove the dressing and shower with the incision uncovered.
- Do not directly wash your incision and gently pat dry.
- Avoid hot tubs, swimming pools, and lakes for at least 6 weeks.

### Incision Care

The incision is closed with sutures or staples. These are removed 2-3 weeks after surgery. Some redness and swelling around the incision is normal. Please call the clinic to schedule an appointment. This may be scheduled for you before you leave the hospital. Proper incision care helps to decrease risk of infection.

- Leave surgical dressing in place for 5 days after surgery. Inspect daily to ensure it is clean, dry and secure.
- After 5 days, the dressing may be changed every other day as needed.
- If no drainage is present, you can leave it uncovered.
- Do not use any creams, lotions, ointments or alcohol near or on incision.

Once you can remove the dressing, check incision for:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Drainage
- Warmth

### **Activity/Limits**

You should slowly increase your activity. In most cases, common sense will tell you when you are doing too much. Doing too little may delay the return of your strength and stamina.

- Climbing stairs is okay to do right after surgery.
- Begin walking 3 times a day when you return home. Increase the distance as you can.
- You may walk anywhere your footing is safe; stairs, treadmills, walking tracks, or inclines.
- No sport activities until after your follow up appointment.

Until your 4-6 week postop visit with your surgeon:

- No lifting greater than 10 pounds.
- No overhead reaching.
- Avoid strenuous activities like aerobic or cardio activity.
- No extreme side-to-side or up-and-down movement.

### **Driving**

- Do not drive for 2 weeks. Wearing a soft collar while driving limits your neck movement and reduces your field of vision.
- Do not drive until your reflexes return to normal and you feel safe to do so.
- Do not drive while taking narcotic pain medicine.

### **Sexual Activity**

No sex for 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, you may resume sex if comfortable.

### **Sleeping**

- Sleep on either your back or side.
- Always use the soft collar for the first 2 weeks.
- After 2 weeks, use the soft collar for comfort.
- Place your pillow under your head, neck and shoulders to prevent neck from flexing (bending) forward.

### **Smoking**

We strongly suggest you quit using nicotine prior to surgery. It is also best to be nicotine free for at least 4-6 months after surgery.

Forms of nicotine include:

- Cigarettes
- Cigars
- Pipe
- Chewing tobacco
- Nicotine patches
- E-cigarettes/vapes
- Nicotine gum
- Second-hand smoke

### **Compression Stockings**

Please keep wearing compression stockings until you are walking three times a day. If you notice swelling to your legs, please elevate and put on compression stockings. If swelling does not improve, please call the clinic.

### **Pain Management**

It is common to have some pain, numbness, tingling and weakness in your neck and arms. If there is a major change in your symptoms, you should call the Spine Clinic.

To manage pain after surgery:

- Ice the incision area for 20-30 minutes several times a day. Use a towel as a barrier between the ice pack and skin to avoid any skin injuries.
- Reduce overall activity for 48 hours.
- Take opioid medicine as prescribed by your doctor. If you feel the medicine is not decreasing your pain, please contact the clinic. Do not increase your narcotic pain medicine use without talking to your doctor first.
- Please talk to your surgeon before using anti-inflammatory medicine (ibuprofen, Aleve<sup>®</sup>, aspirin, Diclofenac, etc).
- You can start Tylenol<sup>®</sup> (Acetaminophen) right away. Do not take more than 3000mg within a 24-hour period.

### **Refills**

The goal is to taper you off all narcotic pain medicine 4-6 weeks after surgery. If you need a refill, please call the clinic. Call 2-3 business days before you need the refill. Please provide the pharmacy where you want to pick up a refill.

### **Constipation**

Please refer to Health Facts for You: Constipation from Opioids (Narcotics) found in the Postoperative Spine Surgery Packet.

### **When to Call the Doctor**

- Increased pain, redness or swelling around the incision.
- A change in the amount, color, or odor of drainage.
- Redness, warmth or pain in your calf.

- A temperature above 100.5 F for 24 hours.
- A constant headache that changes between sitting, standing and laying down.
- New chest pain or new problems breathing.

### **Return to Work**

The length of time off work will depend on your type of work. If you plan on going back to work before your first post-op appointment you will have restrictions. Please talk about this with your doctor or nurse.

### **Future Clinic Visits**

Your first clinic visit will be in 2-3 weeks to remove sutures or staples. A 6-week post-op visit will be scheduled to check healing and symptoms. Your doctor will decide if you need other clinic visits.

### **Phone Numbers**

If you have questions or concerns, please call the Spine Clinic Monday through Friday between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM at **(608) 265-3207**.

Nights, weekends and holidays, call the paging operator at **(608) 262-0486**. Ask for the “spine resident on call.” Leave your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

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 © 5/2018 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7026.