

Post-operative guidelines for Anterior Cervical Fusion: Comprehensive Spine Institute

Phone: 423-541-5990

Cervical Brace: You must wear the cervical brace (collar) 24 hours a day for a minimum of 6 weeks after surgery; this time period is based on the number of cervical vertebrae fused. The purpose of the brace is to limit the motion of your neck to help the healing of your fusion. The brace should fit snugly. One finger should fit snugly, not loosely, between the brace and your neck. You should **not** turn your head within the brace. You should **not** loosen the brace when you are lying down or sitting. You will be supplied with a second cervical brace so that you may change the brace daily after your shower. Showering instructions are written below.

Showering: You may shower on the 5th day after surgery. Plan to have someone to help you with your brace and with cleaning your incision at shower time. Enter the shower with your brace on. Sit on the shower seat. Shower and wash your hair with the brace on, then remove the brace and wash your neck. Do not rub your incision. Avoid turning or bending your neck when the brace is off. Squeeze the water from your hair – **do not shake your head**. If you have long hair that will drip water onto the dry brace, wrap your hair in a small towel. Dry your neck gently. Once you are dry, have the person assisting you clean the incision with a cotton ball soaked in hydrogen peroxide and gently pat the incision dry. Put on the new dry cervical brace **before** you leave the shower. The pads inside the collar are help in place with Velcro tabs. Remove the wet pads from the collar after your shower. Wash them with mild soap and rinse them, then roll them in a towel to squeeze out excess water. Lay them on a towel in a sunny window to dry before your next shower. Do not wash them in the washing machine or dry them in the dryer – they will fall apart.

Incision Care: Your surgical incision may be closed with suture or staples. If it is closed with sutures, they will be covered with steri-strips. Let the steri-strips shed off. If the edges of the steri-strips roll up you may trim them for comfort. When the first layer of steri-strips shed off, there may be two short suture tabs at the ends of your incision. Leave them in place. Staples or suture ends are usually removed at the first post-operative visit after your surgeon has assessed your incision.

Your incision should be inspected daily for swelling; slight swelling is not unusual. If there is swelling that looks like a pea or a walnut under your skin call Comprehensive Spine Institute. Clean your incision daily with hydrogen peroxide as instructed above in the showering instructions. If the incision looks reddened outside the area of the staples or steri-strips, if it looks swollen, if there is any drainage from the incision, or if there is any increased tenderness at the incision you should call Comprehensive Spine Institute.

Driving: Drive only when you can safely avoid an accident. You should check with your auto insurance company for any restrictions of your coverage during the time period you are required to wear the cervical brace.

Bone Growth Stimulator: If a bone growth stimulator is ordered by your surgeon, you will be contacted by a representative. This representative will review the use of the device with you. Wear the device as directed

Post-operative guidelines for Anterior Cervical Fusion: Comprehensive Spine Institute

Phone: 423-541-5990

Preventing Blood Clots: During surgery TED hose (white elastic stockings) and sequential compression leggings will be placed on your legs. Once you go home you may stop wearing the TED hose when you are up and walking around. On days when you are less active you should wear the TED hose. After surgery, to assist in preventing blood clots in your legs, you are to perform ankle exercises ten times, every hour you are awake. To perform ankle exercises first point your toes upward (flex) and then point your toes downward (extend). It is important that you continue to perform these exercises while you are less active at home.

Swallowing/Breathing: After surgery you may have the sensation that there is something in your throat after you swallow. This is normal and usually will subside after a few weeks. Eating soft foods, in small well-chewed bites, will help decrease this sensation. Having a glass of water nearby when you eat is advised. Use of a bendable straw makes drinking fluids much easier while you are wearing the cervical brace. If you have any difficulty breathing while in the hospital you need to push the nurse call button **immediately**. If you have any difficulty breathing after you are home you need to call 911 or go to the closest emergency room for **immediate** evaluation.

Activity: For the first several days after hospital discharge, plan to stay home. You may walk around the house and outside for short distances. Advance your activity slowly. Remember – your body is using its energy to **heal**. You can expect to have less stamina than you usually have for a few weeks. There is a direct relationship between activity and pain. If you are too active you will have increased fatigue and pain.

Lifting restrictions: You may not lift more than 15 pounds for the first 6 weeks after surgery, and not more than 30 pounds from the 6th to the 12th weeks after surgery. For reference - a gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds.

Follow-up appointment: In most cases your follow-up appointment will be made at the time of your pre-op surgery conference. If not, call our office on the day you come home from the hospital to make a follow-up appointment.

Medication: In most instances you will receive a prescription for your post-op medications at your pre-operative conference. Take these medications as prescribed. Narcotic pain medication and muscle relaxers will be prescribed for a specific limited time frame after surgery.

If you need a refill of medication please call the office and leave a voice message for Tennova Spine Specialist staff. Please remember to leave your pharmacy phone number, street address and zip code. This information is on the prescription bottle. Please call 2 days **before** you run out of medication or, if it is nearing the end of the week, call on or before Thursday. Medications will only be refilled Monday thru Thursday. The on-call doctor and the weekend call doctor will not phone in medications.

As your pain decreases you may take Tylenol in between doses of your prescription medication. Do not exceed more than a total of 4000 mg of Tylenol daily, including the amount in your prescription medication. (For example if your prescription is 5/500 each tablet contains 5 mg of narcotic medication and 500 mg of Tylenol).

Post-operative guidelines for Anterior Cervical Fusion: Comprehensive Spine Institute

Phone: 423-541-5990

Medication – continued:

Use of narcotic pain medications may result in constipation. During your hospitalization your surgeon prescribes Colace (Ducosate Sodium), a stool softener. You should use Colace after you come home from the hospital for as long as you are taking narcotic medications. It is available over the counter; take it according to the package instructions. Remember to drink plenty of fluids and eat fiber in your diet, such as prunes, to help maintain normal bowel function.

You should not take NSAID medications for 3 months after your surgery. These include, but are not limited to, Celebrex, Mobic, Relafen, Voltaren, Motrin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, or Aleve. If you are unsure if a medication is an NSAID ask your pharmacist.

Calcium: It is important to have an adequate Calcium intake. If you do not drink three glasses of milk a day or the equivalent in other dairy products you should take a Calcium supplement, normally 600 mg twice a day. You must have an adequate Vitamin D intake, 400 i.u. daily, to absorb Calcium. Calcium supplements are available over the counter which include Vitamin D.

Diet: You need to eat a balanced diet to have the nutrients required to heal. After surgery is not the time to go on a weight reducing diet. It is important to maintain good nutrition. If you are not eating well you need to supplement your nutrition with drinks such as Ensure.

Work: The time you are off work will depend on the work you do. If your work does not require lifting more than the limitations listed above under “Activity” you might be able return to work with restrictions. Discuss this with your surgeon at your post-op appointment.

Disability Forms: If you have work related disability forms to be completed, you may deliver, mail or fax them to this office. In some cases, there will be a charge for completion of these forms. It will take 5-7 business days for the forms to be completed and faxed to your insurance carrier, so please plan ahead.

Smoking: Use of nicotine containing products including cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff and nicotine patches has been shown to decrease bone healing and increase your risk of infection. You should stop the use of nicotine products. Other health benefits have also been shown to result from stopping nicotine use.

Antibiotic treatment: After your fusion you will need to take antibiotics before any dental or invasive medical procedures for the rest of your life. The dentist or physician performing these procedures prescribes this medication. We have provided a protocol for antibiotics for reference. We advise you provide this protocol to your primary care physician and your dentist for your chart. If you require another copy of the protocol in the future please contact Comprehensive Spine Institute.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Comprehensive Spine Institute at 423-541-5990

(revised: 07/06/2019 ajo)

Antibiotic Prophylactic Regimens Recommended for Dental and Other Invasive Procedures

Situation	Agent	Regimen-single dose 30 to 60 minutes prior to procedure	
		Adults	Children
Oral	Amoxicillin	2 gm	50 mg/kg
	Ampicillin	2 g IM or IV	50 mg/kg IM or IV
	OR		
Unable to take Oral Medication	Cefazolin or Ceftriaxone	1 g IM or IV	50 mg/kg IM or IV
Allergic to Penicillins Or Ampicillin	Cephalexin**~	2 g	50 mg/kg
	OR Clindamycin	600 mg	20 mg/kg
Oral Regimen	OR		
	Azithromycin or Clarithromycin	500mg	15 mg/kg
Allergic to Penicillins Or Ampicillin and Unable to take Oral Medication	Cefazolin or Ceftriaxone~	1 g IM or IV	50 mg/kg IM or IV
	OR Clindamycin	600 mg IM or IV	20 mg/kg IM or IV

*IM-Intramuscular

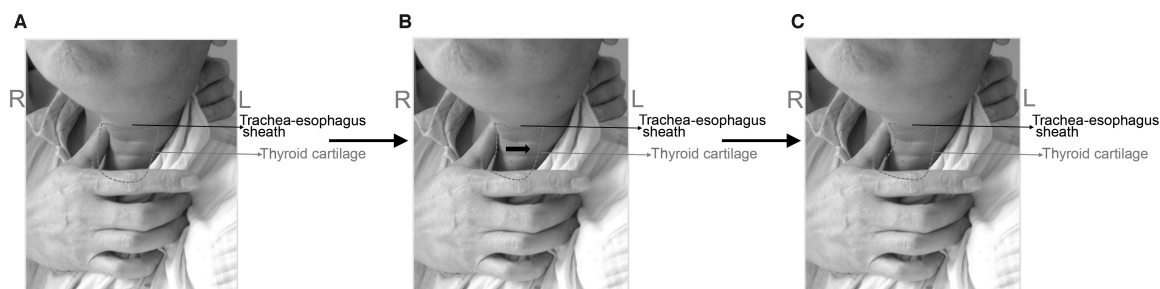
*IV- Intravenous

**Or other first or second generation oral cephalosporin in equivalent adult or pediatric dosage

~Cephalosporins should not be used in an individual with a history of anaphylaxis, angioedema urticaria with penicillins or ampicillin.

Tracheal/Esophageal Traction Exercise Comprehensive Spine Institute

Phone: 423-541-5990



1. To relax the soft tissue around the trachea and the esophageal sheath, use your right thumb to softly and gradually push the right part of the thyroid cartilage to the other side.
2. After relaxation, push the thyroid cartilage from right to left at least 1 cm across the midline of the neck.
3. Perform the exercise twice per day (15 counts each time) until surgery. You may resume the exercise post operatively when cleared by your surgeon.

Question: If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Comprehensive Spine Institute 423-541-5990

Prescription Policy

Prescriptions, both new and refill will be addressed Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The on-call physician will **not** call in medication after the hours posted or on weekends.

To expedite medication requests when contacting our office, please provide the name of the medication, the amount of the medication you are currently taking, the pharmacy name and telephone number, as well as your name, date of birth and a phone number, including area code, where you may be contacted.

Please allow 24 hours for your prescription request to be addressed with your physician and phoned into your designated pharmacy.

Dr. James M. Osborn

Dr. Garrick W. Cason