

## **Post-op guidelines for Complex Spine Reconstruction**

Phone: 423-541-5990

**TLSO brace:** A TLSO brace will be prescribed for you to wear in the post-operative period. You will be measured for this brace at South Eastern Orthotic in the pre-operative period and the orthotic specialist will bring the brace to the hospital after surgery. The purpose of the brace is to support your back while your lumbar fusion heals. You must wear the brace for the first three months after surgery whenever you are not lying flat in bed, except for when you are in the shower, seated on a shower seat. In most cases after three months you will be given instructions to wean out of the brace over a four-week period. The brace should fit snugly around your torso. It is important that the fit remains snug, so if you lose weight you need to call the orthotic company to arrange to have the brace refitted; their phone number is on the front of the brace. If the brace rubs against your skin in any way that causes discomfort you should contact the orthotic company to have the brace adjusted. Wear a plain cotton T-shirt under the brace for comfort. Learning to put the brace on independently is very important and the physical therapists and nurses caring for you in the hospital after your surgery will assist in learning this skill.

**Showering:** You will need a seat in the shower. The physical therapists and the discharge planner at the hospital will arrange for a shower seat to be provided to you. You will need assistance to shower for the first few weeks after surgery. You should wear the TLSO brace into the shower and sit on the shower seat. Once you are seated, remove the TLSO brace and hand it to the person helping you. Avoid bending and twisting from the waist during the shower. The person assisting you will need to wash and dry areas you cannot easily reach. Once you have finished showering, dry off. Gently pat incision areas dry. The person assisting you should then gently clean all incisions with a cotton ball soaked in hydrogen peroxide and pat incisions dry, then assist you to put on a clean T-shirt and put the brace back on. Once you are wearing the brace you may exit the shower.

**Incision care:** Clean your incision daily with hydrogen peroxide as instructed above in the showering instructions. Your staples will be removed when your surgeon finds your incision has healed adequately. At this time steri-strips will usually be placed on the incision. Let the steri-strips shed off. If the edges of the steri-strips roll up you may trim them for comfort. If the incision looks reddened for a small area around each staple this is normal. If there is redness beyond the staples, if the incision 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 at 423-. Please do this early in the day.

**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 TLSO brace.

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**Preventing Blood Clots:** During surgery TED hose (white elastic stockings) and sequential compression leggings will be placed on your legs. You will wear these during your hospital stay to help prevent blood clots in your legs. You should wear the TED hose all the time. The sequential compression leggings should be on your legs and in use whenever you are in bed during your hospital stay. 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 do this exercise, first point your toes upward (flex) and then point your toes downward (extend). The physical therapists and nurses caring for you will help you learn this exercise. It is important that you perform the ankle exercises every hour you are awake to prevent blood clots in your legs.

**Preventing Pneumonia:** After surgery you will be instructed in the use of an inspirimeter. This device helps you to breathe deeply and prevent pneumonia. You are to use the inspirimeter 15 times every hour you are awake. The respiratory therapy and nursing staff will assist you to learn how to use this device. It is important that you use the inspirimeter every hour you are awake to help prevent post-operative pneumonia.

**Activity:** During your hospital stay the most important activity you need to do is to learn to get in and out of your brace independently. The physical therapy staff and nursing staff will assist you to learn this skill. Once you are discharged, for the first month after surgery, plan to stay home. You may walk around the house and outside for short distances. The physical therapists and discharge planner at the hospital will arrange for a walker to be provided to you. If you have stairs in your home tell the physical therapist at the hospital and/ or the rehab center. They will assist you to practice the safe use of stairs during your hospital/rehab stay.

At discharge from the hospital the physical therapists and the discharge planner will arrange for a bedside commode for you to take home. You will need the commode in your regular bathroom. Remove the regular toilet seat from the toilet and remove the bucket from under the bedside commode. Place the commode seat over the toilet. The seat on the commode is about 4 inches higher than a regular toilet seat and it has handles that will make sitting and rising much easier.

Advance your activity slowly. It is better to walk for short distances more frequently than long distances less often. A good rule is to never go farther from the house than you think you can walk back. Remember - your body is using its energy to **heal**. You can expect to have less stamina than you usually have for the first two months after surgery. There is a direct relationship between activity and pain. If you are too active you will have increased fatigue and pain. If this happens it is better to decrease your activity to the previous level rather than increase use of pain medication.

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**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 this office @ 423-728-1650 on the day you come home from the hospital to make a follow-up appointment. If you go to rehab, the appointment should be made for approximately two weeks after the day you transfer from the hospital to the rehab center. If the staff at the rehab center does not mention your follow-up appointment, ask them about it, or call our office and we will make the appointment.

If your fusion is through your stomach and your back (anterior/posterior) you will need to see the vascular surgeon who performed the anterior surgical approach. He will manage your abdominal incision after the surgery. Call his office to arrange a post-operative appointment.

**Medication:** In most instances you will receive a prescription for your post-op medications at your pre-operative conference with your surgeon. 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 a member of the Comprehensive Spine Institute staff @ 423-728-1650. Please remember to leave your pharmacy phone number. 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 called in 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).

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.

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**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 to absorb Calcium, 400 i.u., daily. Calcium supplements are available over-the-counter that include Vitamin D.

**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. Our fax number is 423-728-1655. 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.

**Diet:** You need to eat a balanced diet to have the nutrients you need 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.

**Smoking:** Use of nicotine containing products including cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco and nicotine patches has been shown to decrease bone healing and increase your risk of infection. It is recommended that you stop the use of nicotine products. Other health benefits have been shown to result from stopping nicotine use.

**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.

**Antibiotic treatment:** After your fusion you will need to take antibiotics before any dental or invasive medical procedure for life. The dentist or physician performing these procedures can prescribe this medication. We have provided a protocol for antibiotics for your 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: 07/05/2019 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.

## TLSO Brace Instructions

**Purpose of the Brace:** The purpose of the brace is support for the back while your lumbar spinal fusion or thoracic / lumbar fracture heals.

**Brace Wear:** You must wear the brace whenever you are not lying flat in bed.

**Length of Brace Wear:** In most cases you will be required to wear the TLSO brace for a period of three months. At the end of the three-month period you will be provided with a brace weaning schedule that will gradually reduce your brace wear over a period of four weeks. The total length of required brace wear will be at the discretion of you surgeon.

**Showering Instructions:** The patient will need a shower seat for his/her shower. You will need assistance to shower for the first few weeks. You should wear the TLSO brace into the shower and sit down on the shower seat. Once you are seated, remove the TLSO brace and hand it off the person assisting you (this is the only time you may remove the brace when you are upright). Proceed with your shower and when complete dry off completely. After you are completely dry put on a clean cotton t-shirt and put the brace back on. Rise from the shower seat and step out of the shower. Avoid bending and twisting from the waist during your shower.

**Brace Fit:** The brace should fit snugly around your torso. It is important that the fit remains snug; therefore, if you lose weight you will need to contact the orthotic company who provided you with the brace and make arrangements to the have the brace re-fitted. If the brace rubs against your skin in nay way that causes you discomfort, contact the orthotic company who provided you with your brace and make arrangements for the brace to be re-adjusted.

## 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. Garrick W. Cason*

*Dr. James M. Osborn*