



After My Lumbar Spine Surgery

Some things my support person should know

Maine Medical

PARTNERS

Neurosurgery & Spine

A department of Maine Medical Center

Pain management may be hard for me.

It is important to keep my pain well managed so that I can stay active throughout the day.

Pain management tools that can be helpful in addition to pain medicine are:

- Ice
- Changing position frequently
- Gentle walking
- Slow steady breathing
- Limiting sitting to 20 minutes at a time

I will likely be prescribed a narcotic pain medicine that lasts a short time and this is the right time to take this. If either of us have any concerns about the directions or risk for dependence on this medicine, we should call my surgeon's office.

Pain Medicine often causes constipation.

There are some ways to help me prevent constipation while I am taking pain medicine. Here are some of the things I will need:

- Foods high in fiber- Healthy meals with extra fiber may be hard for me to make since my activity will be limited. You can help by making meals for me or leaving easy to grab foods like bran cereal, fruits, and vegetables.
- Extra fluids – I should drink 6-8 full glasses of water each day.
- Stool softener – I will likely need to take a stool softener as long as I am taking pain medicine.

I should limit sitting to 20-30 minutes at a time.

Gentle reminders about changing position throughout the day and limiting sitting may be helpful. Sitting for too long will make my pain worse and lower my circulation. This will take me longer to heal.

I should avoid bending, lifting, and twisting. This will limit my ability to do household chores, inside and outside.

Some activities will make my pain worse and may make my recovery take longer.

Until I see my surgeon again, I should avoid household chores like:

- Washing dishes
- Vacuuming
- Making beds
- Loading laundry
- Raking
- Sweeping
- Gardening

Walking is the best and only exercise I should do until I see my surgeon again.

I should not do any strength building (core workouts, weights, etc.) until I am told that I can by my surgeon. This could be at my post-op visit, but it may be longer.

Walking helps circulation which promotes healing and prevents blood clots. To build my strength and mobility I should:

- Start by taking short walks around the house.
- Add in more walks each day as it gets easier and I have less pain.
- Focus on walking more often, not on walking longer.

Since it is hard for me to see my surgical site, please check my incision once a day

Until my incision is fully healed, you need to check for

- Redness
- Drainage
- Extra tenderness
- Swelling
- Heat

If we have any questions or concerns we can call my surgeons office.

I may need help cleaning my surgical site or bathing

I cannot sit or soak in water (no bath, pool, or hot tub) until my incision(s) are fully healed. This will be at least 2 weeks after my surgery. As long as my incision(s) are not open or draining I can take a shower and gently pat the surgical site dry.

I can be sexually active again when it is comfortable for me.

I should not have sex while I am healing. When I feel ready to have sex, I should maintain spine precautions with any sexual activity.


I will not be able to drive for at least 2 weeks

Just riding as a passenger and getting in and out of the car will be uncomfortable after surgery. I should not ride on any ATVs, snowmobiles, or riding lawnmowers until my surgeon says I can. This will likely be at my post op visit.

I can drive when:

- I am not taking narcotic pain medicine
- I have full strength in my legs and feet
- I feel comfortable driving.

Maine Medical Partners – Neurosurgery & Spine

 (207) 885-0011

mainemedicalpartners.org