

About Your Surgery

A guide from Azalea Orthopedics



LUMBAR DECOMPRESSION

AZALEA
ORTHOPEDICS

Home Care Instructions

Lumbar Decompression

You are recovering from a posterior lumbar decompression. Below are guidelines that your doctor requests that you follow after you are discharged from the hospital.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

At first, you will be aware of pain and soreness directly related to your surgery. Soreness at and around your back incision is expected and will gradually decrease. Your doctor will give you a prescription for oral pain medication. Follow the directions on the bottle. If a refill is needed, please have your pharmacy call your doctor's office for each refill. Your doctor may decrease the strength of your medication as your discomfort and need for medication decreases. (Refills are not processed after office hours).

It is okay to use an ice pack for pain control. Please be careful to only apply ice for short periods of time to prevent tissue freezing and injury.

Please call your doctor's office in the unlikely event that your postoperative pain suddenly increases or if you develop any of the following symptoms: wound drainage, new weakness; loss of sensation to your legs and/or back; arms (neck surgery only); or loss or change in bowel or bladder control.

DIET

Please resume your normal diet. Extra liquids, fruits and vegetables are encouraged to prevent constipation. A high fiber diet is recommended, but it may be discouraged by your Primary Care Physician; please check with your internist if you have constipation after discharge. Pain medication and lack of activity can lead to difficulty with bowel movements. A healthy diet is the best way to manage this. Try to avoid repeated use of laxatives. Call your doctor's office if you have any questions.

INFECTION

Infection is not expected after surgery, but it can occur. Dermabond, skin glue, was placed over your incision. You may shower the day after surgery, but you need to AVOID TUB BATHS, WHIRLPOOLS, JACUZZIS, SWIMMING POOLS, ETC. for one month unless otherwise instructed by your surgeon.

Some swelling around the incision(s) or drain site can be normal. Fluid can accumulate under the skin, which can be bothersome. This area of swelling should be watched daily. Over time, it should slowly decrease. If the swelling worsens, or if the incision begins to drain, please call your doctor's office. Also call if the incision becomes "angry looking", such as: very red, swollen and hot to the touch or if a fever greater than 101 occurs. This may be a sign of infection and may need to be evaluated and treated right away. If you need to call after office hours or on the weekend, your doctor's answering service will provide instructions on how to reach your doctor or his associate on call.

ACTIVITY

At first, you will limit yourself due to stiffness and soreness. After the first several weeks, however, you will become more active. Therefore, you should be aware of the following to prevent injury and to assist with the healing process.

- 1) Avoid twisting, bending forward from the waist or heavy lifting. Bending at the hips and knees into a hip-hinge position is acceptable as long as your back remains straight.
- 2) Walking, stair climbing, riding as a passenger in a car or taking public transportation is permitted in most cases. Driving is usually allowed after the first office visit with your doctor (approximately 2-4 weeks after surgery). If you are taking much less pain medication and can function, call your doctor about driving sooner.
- 3) RETURN TO WORK: This will vary for each patient. Your doctor will make this decision based on the reason for surgery, the outcome of the surgery; the type and length of work required, etc. Return to work during the muscle/soft tissue healing period will only be allowed if the patient can return with restrictions (generally no lifting greater than 10-15 pounds and no repetitive bending or twisting from the waist and no prolonged sitting). Check with your employer about returning to work with these restrictions.

SCAR CARE

Exposure of a healing incision to sunlight or tanning beds can be potentially harmful and bad sunburn may occur. It is recommended to apply a sun block over the incision during the first year unless otherwise advised by a doctor.

FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up is very important after any spinal surgery. Your cooperation in returning to see your doctor at the listed times is appreciated. Your surgeon may require x-rays when you return to see him, based on how you feel. The doctor will be able to update you on your activity allowances at each office visit.

The logo for Azalea Orthopedics features the word "AZALEA" in a large, elegant, serif font with a decorative flourish extending from the left. Below it, the word "ORTHOPEDICS" is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. The entire logo is rendered in a metallic, silver color with a slight shadow effect.

AZALEA
ORTHOPEDICS

3414 Golden Road •

8101 South Broadway • Tyler, Texas

(903) 939-7500 • (800) 248-0426