

**Fellowship Trained
Spine Surgeons**

Thomas M. Sweeney II, MD, PhD
Board Certified Orthopaedic
Surgery
CEO & Medical Director

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**DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANTERIOR OR POSTERIOR CERVICAL FUSION
PROCEDURES**

ACTIVITY:

1. To get out of bed, turn to the side and use your arms to push up from the bed as you lower your legs to the floor.
2. You will need help showering for the first week at home, if your doctor allows this.
3. Wear clothes that are easy to put on, such as button down shirts or large tee-shirts. Wear shoes that are comfortable and easy to put on.
4. Increase walking every day to build up strength & endurance.
5. Put household objects at a level where you can reach them.
6. You may not drive a car until cleared by your doctor and you are no longer taking narcotics with muscle relaxants.
7. Do not lift anything heavier than a dinner plate for 6 weeks or longer if your doctor advises.
8. Do not twist your neck to look at something to the left or right – turn your whole body to the direction you wish to see.
9. Do not participate in any strenuous activities.

WOUND CARE:

1. If your doctor has cleared you to shower, and the dressing is off, have help getting into and out of the shower the first few times. Do not scrub the wound – rather let warm water run down over the wound.
2. If you or a family member have been instructed to change the dressing, always use a new dry sterile dressing.

Nutrition:

1. Eat a well balanced diet. The hospital dietician can answer any questions you may have.
2. Take 1200 mg of calcium daily. (A well balanced diet will supply the needed calcium).
3. Have someone prepare your meals if you are unable to do this yourself, and eat foods that are easy to swallow.
4. If it has been three days and you have not had a bowel movement, you may eat prunes, drink prune juice, raisin bran, or any high fiber foods to help with constipation. **DO NOT STRAIN TO HAVE A BOWEL MOVEMENT.**
5. Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water a day, more in the summer.

NECK BRACE:

1. If you are wearing a Philadelphia collar or Aspen collar, your therapist or nurse will show you the proper way to put on and take off the brace.
2. You are to wear the brace at all times. The only time you can remove it is when you are lying flat. You will need someone to help with this.
3. When eating, tuck a napkin inside the brace, under your chin to catch any spilled food.

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4. You may apply powder lightly around the neck to prevent irritation from the neck brace.
5. Do not sleep on a big overstuffed pillow. This causes your neck to tilt forward – a small baby pillow is best.

**CALL YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING THINGS
HAPPEN:**

1. Any swelling, redness and warmth of the wound, or sudden bright bleeding.
2. Foul smelling or greenish drainage from the wound.
3. Increased pain or pain not relieved by the prescribed pain medicine.
4. Sudden loss of function of either arm.
5. Pain or swelling in the calves of your legs, or sudden chest pain.
6. Sudden onset of numbness or tightening of your hands, different from when you were discharged from the hospital.
7. Any sudden difficulty in swallowing or speaking.

**FOR ANY SUDDEN LOSS OF FUNCTION WHICH IS NOT RELIEVED BY A
POSITION CHANGE – CALL 911**

If you are unable to reach your doctor for any of the above noted items, proceed to the Emergency Room for evaluation and they will call your doctor.