

## Post Op Instructions – ACDF

The following postoperative instructions are guidelines and have been provided for your convenience. These may be modified for individual patients.

1. Lifting: No lifting, pushing or pulling objects that are over 10 lbs until cleared by your surgeon
2. Bending/Twisting your neck: minimize the bending and twisting of your neck. You can move normally, but do not do activities that put stress on your neck (cracking your neck, sitting with your neck in awkward positions, etc)
3. Exercise: Please do not exercise vigorously (running, weight-lifting, swimming, etc) until cleared by your physician. Generally, patients cannot exercise vigorously for up to 8 weeks after surgery. You may walk, but rest if you start to feel uncomfortable. Start walking for 10 minutes 3-4 times per day, and you can slowly increase it up to 30 minutes 3-4 times per day, depending upon how you feel.
4. Work: Most patients do not return to work for 6 weeks after surgery. However, individual cases may vary
5. Sutures/staples: If sutures or staples have been used, you will need to make an appointment 10-14 days after the date of surgery to have them removed. If you notice small clear sutures at the skin incision, do not remove it – they will either dissolve or will be taken out at your post op visit.
6. Wound: keep your wound clean and dry at all times. If you start to notice swelling, redness or drainage from your wound, please notify the surgeon immediately.
7. Bathing: you may take baths or showers but make sure to keep the incision clean and dry at all times. You can cover the wound/dressing with a waterproof dressing if showering and can cover the area with a towel if sponge bathing.
8. Driving: You should not drive for the first 14 days after surgery, except to come to the office for your first post op visit. You can ride in a car for short distances, but generally riding in a car may aggravate your back in the immediate postoperative period.
9. Energy level: try to resume a normal routine as quickly as possible. You will be more tired for a period of time after surgery (weeks to months) and it can take a while for your energy levels to return to normal.
10. Medications: You will likely be given a pain reliever, muscle relaxer and other medications. Take all of your medications on time and as prescribed. You may try decreasing your pain medications/narcotics if you feel that you are able to do so. It is

generally a good idea to start taking a multivitamin, as well as vitamin C, immediately following your surgery, in order to help with healing. Narcotics will often times make you constipated, which can be treated with over-the-counter medications (Senekot, Dulcolax, Colace or Milk of Magnesia), drinking plenty of water and increasing your dietary fiber (vegetables, fiber supplements, etc).

11. Diabetics: make sure to control your blood glucose levels and to avoid sugar in the first several weeks after surgery. If you are diabetic, you are at a higher risk for infection and this can often times be avoided with careful control of blood sugars and adhering to a diabetic diet.

12. Dental work: do not schedule dental work for 2 weeks prior to your surgery, or for 8 weeks after your surgery. If you have had a fusion surgery, you will require antibiotic pre-medication for any dental work done within a one year of your surgery.

13. Physical therapy/home strengthening exercises: Do not resume these activities until your provider clears you to do so.

15. Sexual activities: is permitted whenever comfort permits.

16. Bracing: wear the brace at all times for the first three weeks after surgery (you may remove it when in bed to sleep). We will discuss the extent of brace use at the post op clinic (it depends on your bone quality)

17. Smoking/nicotine: Smoking and nicotine containing products (vapes, chew, etc) should be avoided at all costs. These chemicals inhibit fusion and healing.

This list of guidelines covers the basics of what you will need to know, but does not substitute for the physician's recommendations and is not comprehensive.