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POSTOP CARE AFTER - CERVICAL ARTIFICIAL DISC SURGERY

WOUND

- There are typically dissolving sutures in the neck and no removal is required. Any paper tapes on the wound will fall off in the shower
- You can shower but keep the neck dry (i.e. not soaking)
- Do not swim for at least 4 weeks; if you swim, backstroke or breast stroke is better than freestyle
- Do not put any creams on the wound
- Do not get the wound wet; do not take baths for 4 weeks
- For the first week after surgery, after every shower, pat the wound dry

EXERCISES

- The best exercise is walking. Small amounts frequently are best
- Follow the guidelines given to you by the physical therapist in hospital
- No collar is needed

POSTURE

- Avoid sitting for over an hour without taking a break
- Make sure your computer monitor is at eye level (put some books under it to lift it up)
- Keep mobile- change positions frequently

DRIVING

- Try not to drive for the week after surgery
- When driving take a 15 minute break for every 45 minutes of driving
- Do not drive if taking a lot of medication!

RETURN TO WORK

- You can return to a desk job 2 weeks after surgery. Don't sit for prolonged periods of time.
- See your neurosurgeon at 6 weeks before returning to a physical occupation

PAIN RELIEF

- Tylenol (#1, 2 or 3), Percocet or Vicodin can be taken for wound pain after surgery
- Robaxin or Flexeril is used for muscle spasm
- If there was pain in the arm or leg prior to surgery, it is not uncommon to get twinges of pain for up to a month after surgery
- Numbness is very slow to recover and there may always be some residual numbness
- Pins and needles are not uncommon after surgery but should settle over time
- You will need to take an anti-inflammatory such as Mobic for at least 6 weeks after surgery

FOLLOW-UP

- You will need to see your neurosurgeon 2 weeks after surgery
- Repeat X-rays are needed at 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months then yearly after surgery

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- If the wound becomes excessively red, swollen or painful or develops a discharge, or you have questions, contact your neurosurgeon at his office or see your GP.
- If it is an emergency and you cannot contact anyone come to the Emergency Room