

## **NECK SURGERY AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS**

- If you received anesthesia during the procedure, you will be sleepy for the rest of the day and maybe tomorrow. **DO NOT** drive, operate any machinery, or do anything requiring coordination for the rest of the day. Do not sign any legal documents or make any important decisions in the next 24 hours. After anesthesia, you should breathe deeply each waking hour in order to keep the lungs clear.
- On the day of your surgery and during that night, you should have a responsible adult to be with you for your protection and safety. You may go to the bathroom with assistance.
- Use medications as instructed. Many patients find Tylenol to be adequate to control postoperative discomfort. **DO NOT** take aspirin products or NSAIDS (e.g. Ibuprofen, Advil, Aleve, Motrin, Naproxen, Excedrin). If any of these are prescribed to you by another physician, please advise our office.

### **DIET**

- For the first 24 hours after surgery we recommend a light diet. We do not recommend *any alcoholic beverages for 24 hours after your procedure. After that, we do not recommend combining your postoperative pain medication with alcoholic beverages.* After the first 24 hours you may advance to a regular diet as you can tolerate.

### **YOUR DRESSING**

- You will have a head wrap dressing. This dressing will be removed at your 3 day postop.
- You may resume showering once the dressing is removed.
- You will need to wear your compression garment as much as tolerated for the first three weeks following your surgery. You may remove it for showering.

### **THINGS TO HAVE**

- Prescription Pain Medication
- Prescription Nausea Medication
- Aquaphor
- Stool Softener

### **WOUND CARE**

- Wound care is extremely important and can help with healing. Please follow the instructions carefully.
- After the dressings are removed you will no longer require dressings.

### **WHAT IS NORMAL**

- You will probably experience moderate discomfort for 2 to 3 days after surgery.
- Slight oozing of blood from the incision site over the first 2 days.
- Swelling, which is the body's way of healing, can last for several months; the swelling will likely be worse on day 2 or 3 after surgery and then improve significantly over the next several weeks.
- Some black and blueness which is associated with healing; because of gravity, the black and blueness may settle down into your lower neck. All patients are different: sometimes the bruising is gone in less than a week, other times it lasts 2-3 weeks.
- Take comfort in the fact that the "tight" feeling, numbness, bumps and irregularities, are normal after surgery and slowly improve over months.

- The body heals a surgical scar in slow stages. Gradually improving surgical scars and contours can be expected **for up to 1 year after surgery**.
- As the bruising and swelling start to decrease and you start to pick up some more of your normal routine, you will feel more like your normal self.

### **WHAT TO AVOID**

- Driving or operating heavy equipment after sedation or while taking prescription pain medication.
- Heavy lifting or strenuous activities for 3 weeks.
- Repetitive bending over for the first 3 weeks after surgery.
- Sun exposure; if you must go into the sun, wear a large brimmed hat and sunscreen.
- Sleeping flat. Place 2-3 pillows behind head at night as it will help with swelling.
- Smoking/tobacco as these slow the healing process.

### **AFTERCARE ACTIVITY**

- You may resume showering and shampooing once the headwrap dressing is removed.
- For the first 3 weeks lift no more than 10 pounds.
- The **ONLY** exercise for the first 3 weeks is walking: Outside walking is ok after 2 weeks.
- You may return to the gym after 4wks, doing only one-half of your usual regimen and take 3 weeks to return to your regular regimen. Weight, machines, running, swimming, golf, tennis, yoga, and Pilates after 3 weeks
- You may return to sedentary work 2 weeks after your surgery.
- Please refrain from sexual activity for 3-4 weeks.
- Please refrain from driving a car for at least 3-5 days after your surgery date. After 3-5 days you may resume driving if you feel comfortable. Please ensure you are off all narcotic pain medications before resuming driving.

### **Call Dr. Patel on his cell phone (253)733-7048 if you experience the following:**

- A sudden, severe decrease or dimness in your vision.
- Severe, unrelenting, or stabbing pains, particularly if it is associated with vomiting or fever.
- Extreme swelling around the surgical area that is very hot, firm, or tense.
- If you have severe or increased pain not relieved by medication.
- If you have any side effects to medication; such as, rash, nausea, headache, vomiting.
- If you have an oral temperature over 101 degrees.
- If you have any yellowish or greenish drainage or notice a foul odor.
- If you have (excessive) bleeding or saturation of the dressing. A small amount of bleeding may appear on the dressing or pad.
- If you have an increase in pain after the first 48 hours.
- If you experience persistent nausea or vomiting.

**If you experience a medical emergency and are unable to reach the doctor on call, go to the nearest emergency room.**