

# CERVICAL

## DR. REMI NADER'S POST OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS



### Caring for Your Incision Site

While at home: **KEEP THE WOUND CLEAN AND DRY AT ALL TIMES.**

**YOU SHOULD CHANGE THE BANDAGE DAILY** as follows:

- Remove bandage with clean gloves or freshly washed hands.
- Reapply a fresh clean/sterile bandage.
- Do not pick at the scab, as this may cause scarring and/or bleeding.

Cover the wound with a water proof bandage if you want to shower during the 2 weeks following surgery, (a Zip-loc bag securely taped to a margin of 2-3 in. around incision site is a good substitute).

You may remove the bandage to shower as usual after the first 2 weeks, but do not soak the area in water (no tub baths, hot tubs, or swimming) until the sutures are removed. You may resume swimming / soaking activities 2 weeks after your sutures are removed provided that the wound is completely closed.

If sutures or staples are in place, it is important to keep your appointment for removal.

If Steri-Strips were applied, they will usually fall off by themselves after 10-12 days.

### Bracing After Surgery

You are to **WEAR A CERVICAL COLLAR AT ALL TIMES** to limit motion of your upper spine and neck, so you can heal. How long you will need to wear the collar depends on your procedure. The collar is only removed for cleaning the skin underneath, and then it should go right back on. Be sure to follow your doctor's orders about wearing your collar.

Your collar is fit well if:

- You are not able to slide your chin inside the collar and your chin does not go over the edge of the collar.
- The lower edge of the collar is not resting on your collar bones or digging into your shoulders.
- The opening in the middle of the front of the collar is centered on your neck.
- No plastic is touching your skin. Only the blue pads should touch your skin.

### Medications and Pain

You may have pain for a few days after surgery.

You **may** receive prescription(s) that could include:

- A pain medication such as Tramadol or Acetaminophen/ codeine (Tylenol #3) or sometimes a stronger narcotic if necessary
- A muscle relaxer such as cyclobenzaprine or tizanidine
- A medication that helps with nerve pain such as gabapentin or pregabalin

Tell your surgeon if you are allergic to any of these medications

Take the muscle relaxer and medication for nerve pain along with tylenol if needed, first to relieve the pain.

Add the pain medication prescribed only if your pain is not relieved by the above medications

### General directions

You can be a passenger in a car, but **YOU CANNOT DRIVE** at least until your doctor clears you to drive and you are told to stop wearing the collar.

You may feel more tired after your surgery, so rest.

Avoid heavy lifting, strenuous activities or any contact sports until your surgeon allows you.

In general, **YOU SHOULD NOT SIT OR STAND FOR MORE THAN 20 MINUTES AT A TIME.**

Generally, patients return to work whenever they feel able to increase their activities. However, your surgeon should confirm the time for your return to work.

You must **AVOID LIFTING HEAVY OBJECTS, NO MORE THAN 5 POUNDS.**

### Call your doctor

if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Your incision becomes excessively warm, red, or you see pus or any drainage other than blood spotting coming from it.
- Increasing pain, weakness or numbness in your arms or legs.
- Trouble breathing.
- Severe headache that will not go away.
- New problems controlling your bowel movements or bladder (urine).
- You cannot drink fluids or keep them down.
- Fever above 101.3°F or shaking chills