

Post-operative instructions

Cervical Foraminotomy

- 1) Expect to be discharged the day of or the day following surgery
- 2) A soft collar will be given to you for comfort; you can stop using it whenever you choose. However, you may want to wear it when driving or sitting at the computer for the first few weeks after surgery.
- 3) You will be given pain medicine and muscle relaxants to take home when you're discharged. You may also start anti-inflammatories such as Alleve or Advil the day after you get home.
- 4) Ice the incision three to four times a day, for 10 minutes, for the first week post-operatively.
- 5) The stitches are dissolvable. The incision should be kept dry for 5 days; you can shower with the dressing on. You can then leave it open to air and the steri-strips will fall off over the next 1-2 weeks.
- 6) Expect neck pain for 1-2 weeks after surgery at the incision and even extending out to the shoulder.
- 7) You may drive 5-7 days after surgery.
- 8) Some patients develop arm pain or tingling 2 to 7 days after surgery. This is usually just inflammation. If you call our office, we will prescribe a short course of steroids which should help with the pain.
- 9) Call the office after you get home and schedule your post-operative appointment which will be about 2-3 weeks after surgery.
- 10) Physical Therapy begins usually at about 4 weeks post-operatively. You will be given a prescription for it at your post-operative appointment.
- 11) For the first one month (4 weeks) after surgery, you can lift up to 10 lbs. You can start on a stationary exercise bike after 2 weeks (ideally a recumbent one) but no high impact activities for 4-6 weeks.
- 12) After one month, you can gradually increase your activities as tolerated with supervision by the physical therapist.
- 13) Pain improves quickly after surgery, but muscle weakness can take several months and numbness can take more than a year. Sometimes, there is some permanent numbness, especially if you had it for a long time before the surgery.
- 14) Return to work is determined by your occupation, level of pain and function post-operatively and the restrictions outlined above.
- 15) If you have questions, please call the office.