

**Cardinal Neurosurgery & Spine, Inc.**  
**Daniel L. Kitchens, MD**  
**3009 North Ballas Road, Suite 304A**  
**St. Louis, MO 63131**

**Phone 314.842.2100**

**Fax 314.843.0164**

**Exchange 314.388.5359**

**THINGS TO DO BEFORE SURGERY:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **STOP MEDICATION THAT CAN THIN YOUR BLOOD 10 DAYS BEFORE SURGERY.** This includes prescription blood thinners (Coumadin, Plavix, Warfarin), Aspirin, prescription or OTC anti-inflammatories (Ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Naproxen, Naprosyn, Celebrex, Lodine, Mobic, Diclofenac, etc) Also hold Fish Oil, Vitamin E, Echinacea, Ephedra, Feverfew, Garlic, Ginger, Ginko, Ginseng, Goldenseal, KavaKava, Licorice, Saw Palmetto, St John's Wort, Valarian root for 10 days prior, or as soon as feasible.

\_\_\_\_\_ **SIGN "RISKS OF SURGERY" FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ **SCHEDULE PRE OP TESTING / MEDICAL CLEARANCE**

\_\_\_\_\_ *If you are having a multiple level cervical or lumbar fusion, have had previous surgery at the same level, and/or are a smoker, you will need to use a **BONE GROWTH STIMULATOR**. A representative from Gateway Medical Equipment will be calling you to either set up an appointment before your surgery, or will meet you at your first post op appointment to provide and explain how to use the Bone Growth Stimulator. If you are having a lumbar fusion on multiple levels, you will need a **BACK BRACE**, also provided by Gateway Medical. *If you are a VA patient, the back brace and bone growth stimulator will be obtained through the VA.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **IF YOU ARE A SMOKER** having fusion surgery, and Dr. Kitchens has indicated that you need to stop use of tobacco products, you will need to pick a **QUIT DATE** and have your nicotine level tested 2 weeks after your quit date. (Cigna / 6 weeks). Contact your Primary Care Physician if you think you will need prescription aides to help you quit smoking. They must be Nicotine-Free products.

Our office will verify insurance benefits, eligibility, and any precertification requirements. **Notify us immediately of any changes to your insurance coverage.**

**THINGS TO DO ON THE DAY OF SURGERY:**

**DO NOT EAT OR DRINK AFTER MIDNIGHT THE NIGHT BEFORE YOUR SURGERY!!**

**\*\*\*\*\*BRING ALL CD'S OF YOUR FILMS ( MRI, CT, MYELOGRAM, etc.) WITH YOU TO THE HOSPITAL ON THE DAY OF SURGERY \*\*\*\*\***

**Surgery may be delayed or cancelled if you do not bring your CD!**

**Remember to ask to have them returned to you after surgery.**

- Skin Prep: Please shower/bathe with an antibacterial soap the night before and again the morning of surgery. (example: Dial soap). Do not apply any lotions, creams, etc. to the surgical area the morning of surgery. Please let our office know if you have any kind of open wound anywhere on your body prior to surgery. Open wounds increase the chance of infection following surgery and if serious enough, may result in postponing surgery.
- Please bring your **back brace** to the hospital on day of surgery, if a brace is required. (Multiple level lumbar surgery only)

## AFTER SURGERY CARE

### For CERVICAL (neck) INCISIONS:

- **YES, you may shower!** Let water run over the incision and gently pat dry with a clean towel.
- **DO NOT soak** (ex: bath tub, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, pool, etc.) for **6 weeks, or until the incision is completely healed.**
- Neck incisions will generally be closed with dissolvable sutures under the skin, along with Dermabond.
- Do not scratch, rub, or pick at the wound or Dermabond to avoid potential infection.
- Stay out of direct sunlight and do not use tanning lamps. Do not apply liquid or ointment medications to the wound while the Dermabond is in place.
- For neck swelling, keep your head elevated and you may also use ice. A bag of frozen peas works well as an ice bag.

### For LUMBAR (back) INCISIONS:

- **YES, you may shower!** Let water run over the incision and gently pat dry with a clean towel.
- **DO NOT soak** (ex: bath tub, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, pool, etc.) for **6 weeks, or until the incision is completely healed.**
- In general, keep the incision line clean and dry. It is not necessary to cover the incision with a dressing; however, you may cover if desired for your personal comfort, or if there is drainage present.
- Dermabond/Steristrips: Please leave in place until it falls off OR until we remove it. Do not scratch, rub, or pick at the wound or Dermabond to avoid potential infection.
- Staples will be removed at your first post op appointment, usually 10-14 days following surgery.

### SIGNS OF INFECTION:

- **Drainage that is cloudy, looks like pus, or has a foul odor**
- **Fever greater than 101**
- **Redness, swelling, or warmth at incision line**
- **Increased pain or tenderness to area**
- **If any of the above occur, please call our office as soon as possible (314-842-2100), or the exchange if after hours (314-388-5359)**

### PRESCRIPTIONS:

Prescription pain medication will be given to you when you are discharged. **DO NOT MISPLACE NARCOTIC PRESCRIPTIONS; THEY WILL NOT BE REPLACED IF LOST OR STOLEN.** Generic medications will be given, unless requested otherwise. Because of the addictive nature of narcotics, our goal is to wean you from narcotics as soon as can be tolerated. **DO NOT exceed the recommended dosage.**

### CONSTIPATION:

Narcotics, along with a decrease in your activity level, can cause constipation. **While taking narcotics, it is recommended that you also take a stool softener or laxative.** There are many over the counter medications-check with your pharmacist for recommendations. Drink fluids throughout the day! Walk early and often (once/hour while awake)

### FOR FUSIONS ONLY:

- **DO NOT take Aspirin and Ibuprofen (NSAIDS)** for 3 to 6 months following your surgery since it can impair the fusion process. You may take Acetaminophen or Tylenol (don't exceed 3,000 mg per day!)
- **X-RAYS:** After your first post op visit, you will be seen every 4 weeks. X-rays will be taken before each appointment to monitor the progress of your fusion. Report to Suite 112B about *one hour before your appointment* with Dr. Kitchens: once x-rays are taken, you will be given the films to bring back to our office. You **DO NOT** need an appointment for x-rays. VA patients may need to obtain x-rays through the VA.
- **DENTAL WORK:** You will need to be **pre-medicated with antibiotics before having any dental work for one year** following your fusion surgery. Please call our office 2-3 days before your dental appointment to have a prescription called in to your local pharmacy.

### WORK STATUS:

Depending on the type of surgery you have, you may qualify for FMLA, or short term or long term disability. Check with your employer's Human Resource Department for guidance in determining eligibility. There are usually specific forms that need to be completed and returned to your employer. **PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR PORTION** before providing them to our office and allow **ONE WEEK** for any forms to be completed and returned. Your work status and any restrictions will be discussed at each post op office visit, but it is **YOUR** responsibility to know what is required by your employer in order to continue your benefits.