Post-Operative Instructions for Anterior Cervical Discectomy Procedure

Here are some suggestions for care after an anterior cervical discectomy. We realize that it is impossible to anticipate all of the questions or problems that may arise during this time; however, Dr. Ott, his assistant Glory or one of his colleagues will be available to help you.

To reach us call 619 297-4481 ext. 102

Post-Operative pain

Following an anterior cervical discectomy a moderate amount of neck pain is to be expected. It is also common to have pain to the back of the neck and even the shoulder blades. Pain seems to reach a maximum a day or two following the procedure. This pain gradually diminishes over days to weeks. Numbness or tingling in the arm or hand can be present or continue following your surgery. This will usually lessen over time. Difficulty swallowing and mild hoarseness sometimes develop after this type of surgery and will resolve over time. It is important to report any unusual swelling at the surgical site to your surgeon. Also report any new problems following surgery.

Pain can usually be controlled by a pain medicine by mouth. These medications are typically used for one to four weeks after surgery. These medications may not totally relieve the pain and moderation of activity and local remedies such as heat or ice may help.

Wound Care

The care of your wound is relatively simple. Keep the wound clean and dry following your procedure. You may shower on your fifth post-operative day. You may allow soap and water to drain over the wound. Do not scrub the wound forcefully at this time. Blot the wound dry when you are finished.

Your sutures are buried and will absorb over time - there is no removal necessary. You do not need to reapply a dressing to your wound. You should notify your surgeon of any leakage or drainage from your wound, increasing pain at the incision site unrelieved by pain medication or unusual swelling at the surgical site.
**Activity & Diet**

You can return to normal activities of everyday living promptly. You can drive when you think you are comfortable, usually within a few days. We do not prescribe the use of a collar, as most patients find no benefit from their use.

The most important element in your recovery is time. In time your pain will lessen and after a month you can return to heavy activity. Use common sense and let your pain be your guide for your activity level.

You may resume your regular diet upon discharge from the hospital. Fresh fruits and diets high in fiber may help with the constipation that comes from pain medication and inactivity. If this is still a problem you can find Senakot, Dulcolax and Fleet’s enemas can be found at your local drug store.

**Follow-up**

We will see you about 10 days after operation to check your surgical wound, your progress and answer your questions. Make a list of questions to be answered during the visit, and don’t forget to bring them with you.