



Going Home After Spinal Surgery

Congratulations! You are ready to go home after your spinal surgery.

Can I do all of my regular activities?

To allow your spine to heal, it is important that you follow these instructions until your first follow-up visit with your surgeon:

- DO NOT bend
- DO NOT twist
- DO NOT lift anything over 10 pounds (including children)
- DO NOT push or pull carts, strollers or any other object

How do I care for my incision (cut)?

- If your incision (cut) is covered with gauze you must keep covered for 5 days.
- If the gauze gets dirty or starts to come off, you should remove it and replace it with a clean piece of gauze.
- After 5 days you can remove the gauze as long as the incision (cut) and the gauze are dry. You may notice a few small spots of blood on the gauze but there should not be a large amount of blood, discharge or liquid of any type or color coming from the incision (cut). If the incision (cut) or the gauze is wet, call your surgeon.

How will my stitches be removed?

Your incision (cut) is closed with either staples, sutures (stitches) or Steri-Strips®.

- If you have staples or sutures (stitches) they will be removed by your healthcare team at your follow-up visit.
- Steri-Strips® should fall off on their own between 5 and 7 days after surgery. If not, they will be removed by your healthcare team at your follow up visit.

Can I get my incision (cut) wet?

- DO NOT get your incision (cut) wet for 5 days after your surgery.
- You may take a shower 5 days after surgery.
 - Let the water run on your incision (cut) and gently pat dry.
 - DO NOT rub the incision (cut).
- DO NOT apply any lotions, soaps or powders to the incision (cut).
- DO NOT take a bath, soak or swim until your surgeon says it is okay.



When do I need to see my surgeon for a follow-up visit?

- It is important that you call your surgeon's office to schedule a follow-up appointment on the day you get home from the hospital.
- You will be seen by your surgeon within 14 days after you leave the hospital unless your doctor gives you different instructions.

Call your surgeon immediately if you:

- have a fever of 100.5°F or higher.
- have chills.
- are sweating in your sleep.
- have liquid draining from your incision (cut).
- your incision (cut) opens.
- have new pain.
- suddenly feel weak.
- suddenly cannot control your bowel movements or urination (peeing):
 - cannot make it to the bathroom on time.
 - do not know you have to go.
- have any other unusual symptoms.

IMPORTANT:

- If you had a fusion, DO NOT take aspirin or any other NSAID (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory) including Motrin[®], Aleve[®], Advil[®], Naprosyn[®] for 3 months.
- If you stopped taking blood thinners such as aspirin, Plavix[®] or warfarin (Coumadin[®]) before surgery, speak with your primary care doctor about when to start this medicine again.

Thank you for joining us at NYU- Hospital for Joint Diseases. We wish you a healthy recovery.