

Heartland Neurosurgery
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Waterloo, IA 50702
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Postoperative Care- Cervical Fusion

1. The incision in your neck should require very little care. There are no sutures that need to be removed. It is best to leave it open to air. If you go home with a dressing you can take it off after you shower. Cover it with a clean dressing if there is any drainage. Do not apply any ointments or lotions to the incision. It is best to keep the incision clean and dry.
2. The collar/brace you were given at the hospital is for you to use as needed. You may wear it for comfort. You may remove it if uncomfortable. You may find you do not need it at all. You may find it helps to wear it in the car and on the ride home from the hospital. In certain circumstances, you may be instructed by the physician, PA or NP to wear the collar at all times. If so, then you must wear the collar as instructed and the above does not apply to you. You also should have been given a Philadelphia collar (peach colored) to shower in, unless instructed by the provider that you do not need a collar for showers.
3. DO's
 - . Do get plenty of rest, eat a well balanced diet, and drink plenty of fluids.
 - . Do moderate exercise such as walking.
 - . Do take a quick shower only when the incision is dry and there is no drainage. Do not stand with the shower hitting the incision directly. Avoid bending neck forward or backward. Be sure to dry the area by gently patting dry with a towel or blow drying the area on cool or low.
 - . Do take prescribed medications for pain as indicated and necessary, don't wait for pain to become intolerable.
4. DON'Ts
 - . Don't immerse in water.
 - . Do not drive until approved by provider.
 - . Do not lift anything over 10 pounds until approved by physician.
 - . Avoid the extremes of flexion and extension by not looking way up or way down.
5. Expected recovery time and release to go back to work depends on your job and healing time. This decision will be made by your provider.

6. Call the office at 319-226-9888 immediately if any of the following occur:
 - . Temperature greater than 101.5 degrees and you know you don't have a cold or the flu.
 - . Any severe change or increase in your pain or new weakness.
 - . Any new decreased sensation, numbness or tingling in arms and/or legs.
 - . Any redness or drainage from the incision or drain sites.

7. Follow-up in the office in about three weeks with the physician assistant/nurse practitioner unless otherwise instructed. An appointment should have been made for you by the nurse when you left the hospital, if not, call the office at 226-9888 to schedule an appointment. If you have any questions regarding your appointment please call our office Monday- Thursday 8:30-12:00 or 1:00- 4:30 and Friday till noon.

8. **X-rays-** You should have been given an order form when you left the hospital to get an x-ray of your neck a few days prior to your appointment. Be sure and get those x-rays done prior to your appointment. If your xrays are not done at Covenant, Allen, ADI or United Medical Park be sure to pick up the **CD** of your x-rays to bring with you to your appointment. If you have any questions please call our office.

9. Please check your prescription medications. If you are getting low and will need a refill, please call our office before 11:00am **Tuesday** or **Wednesday** and your refill will be called in to the pharmacy sometime that afternoon. **NO** prescriptions will be called in on Fridays as the physicians, PAs and NPs are in surgery all day during this time.