

SpineFAQs

Post Op Instructions

In general, your job in the post operative period is to concentrate on taking care of yourself and getting better. This is not the time to plan to do a lot of physical work, manage a hectic schedule etc. The first few weeks after spine surgery are important in wound healing, and rapid recovery.

In general, immediately after surgery you should:

- Walk and move about. This helps keep you limber and helps reduce the chance of complications such as blood clots or pneumonia.
- Heed my specific recommendations about lifting
- Take your pain medications regularly at first. If you keep up with your pain management, you will be more comfortable and less anxious. If you get behind in your pain management, it can be more difficult to get the pain under control.
- Get lots of rest, and eat well.
- Avoid smoking

Things you should watch for and be concerned about:

- **Fever over 101.5 that does not go away.** Many people will have an elevated temperature for several days after surgery, but if after 2-3 days you spike a fever over 101.5, and particularly if you also have chills/sweats, you need to contact the office.
- **Persisting wound drainage.** It is common for a spine wound to drain some blood and fluid for a few days, but if the drainage continues, and particularly if it increases, you should contact the office.
- **Headaches when you get up.** This can be a sign of spinal fluid leakage. If you develop a bad headache, especially

when you get up, that seems to improve when lying down, you need to contact the office. We will usually start by having you stay at bedrest for a couple of days.

- **Significant increase in wound swelling or redness.** These can be signs of infection. If things change, make sure you contact the office.

By all means, if you have questions, or concerns, I would rather hear from you than not. You can contact the office the following ways:

During Office Hours (M-F 8:30 to 5)

Call my nurse Stephanie Tooley at 615-695-7729 or the main office at 615-329-6600.

After hours or if you need to speak to someone immediately

Call the main office at 615-329-6600

If you have questions that can wait a little bit, you can email me directly at stahlmangc@tnortho.com (or drstahlmanonline@gmail.com). I will get back to you as soon as I can.

If you feel you are having an emergency, you should go to the local emergency room for evaluation.