



Coastal Neuro Surgery

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Cervical Laminectomy/Fusion

1. Diet:

Maintain your regular diet.

2. Medications:

You may use stool softeners, Panadol or Digesic as you need. Narcotic medication may be prescribed if you require these. You may also be given muscle relaxants. During the healing phase avoid any type of aspirin, aspirin-like products or anti-inflammatory drugs. These have been proven to decrease the healing rate.

3. Activity and Restrictions:

3.1. If prescribed a cervical collar, please use the collar for comfort, especially when riding in a car or out of the house. A soft collar will be prescribed that you should wear when sleeping. It can be removed for showers as long as you are keeping your head centered over the shoulders without rotating or looking up or down. Be sure the shower floor has a grip so that you do not fall over!

3.2 You may shower on day number 3 provided that the neck wound is dry and clean and there is no drainage.

3.3 You should not drive until you are cleared by Dr Coughlan. Following such an operation, you may find that your reaction times are slow because of pain, generalized fatigue, stress of surgery, and prescribed pain medication. You may ride in a car and may find it more comfortable in a reclined position or in the back seat. If you are planning to take long trips, please try to take interval breaks, every 45 minutes, getting out of the car and walking short distances.

3.4 You may take walks inside and outside of your home. You may use a walker if needed for comfort. You may go up and down stairs. Try to gradually increase the distance that you walk.

3.5 You are to avoid any heavy work, housework, shoveling and lifting of more than a few kilos, as well as any strenuous activity.

3.6 Do not begin any type of physiotherapy, an exercise program or sports program until you are instructed to do so. This would usually be at least 6 weeks after the surgery.

3.7 If you smoke, remember that smoking impairs healing of bone and thus slows or decreases the rate of your recovery, leading to poor results and NO FUSION. Smoking cessation will not only help you heal but will improve your general health!

3.8 We do not recommend using hot packs to the neck while you are healing. Hot packs will increase blood flow, increase swelling and increase discomfort early on in your healing phase.

4. Wound Care:

4.1 The majority of cervical fusion patients have their wounds closed with an absorbable suture. If you have staples, they need to be removed anywhere from 7 to 10 days from surgery by your local GP. You may have small steri-strip (mini band-aids) on the wound – let these fall off in the shower over 2-3 days when you get home.

4.2 We recommend a clean dry sterile dressing on an 1-2 day basis until 5 days after the operation.

4.3 If you develop fevers, chills, draining from your wound or have unrelenting pain despite medication, please contact the rooms and leave a message for Dr Coughlan. If you develop increasing weakness of the legs or difficulty passing urine – please go to your nearest emergency department or contact the Neurosurgery Registrar at Prince of Wales Hospital on (02) 9382 2222