

Post-operative Instructions Following Cervical Decompression

1. **Incision:** The incision should be kept clean and dry. The dressing may be removed 24 hours after you leave the hospital and does not need to be replaced. You are allowed to shower when the incision and drain site are without any drainage for 48 hours. The incision should not be submerged in water during activities such as bathing or swimming until after the first follow-up appointment. The incision has sutures underneath the skin that will absorb over time. There may be a layer of skin adhesive (Dermabond®) over the incision. This will begin to peel off on its own. It can be removed completely two weeks after surgery if it still remains.
2. **Activity:** Limit extreme bending and turning of your neck, and do not lift more than 5 pounds (half a gallon of milk) until the return appointment. A single small pillow can be used while sleeping to maintain the neck in a neutral position. A soft collar may be provided that can be worn for comfort. Please do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic medication and you can turn your head comfortably.
3. **Exercise:** Please walk several times daily for exercise. Start out with short walks and gradually increase the distance as your endurance increases. There is no need for formal therapy unless you have specific weakness in your arms. If present, this can be addressed separately after your follow-up appointment.
4. Complications are uncommon, but please contact us if you develop any of these symptoms:
 - Wound infection*
 - Fever over 38°C or 101°F
 - Redness, separation, or drainage from the incision
 - Lower extremity blood clots and pulmonary emboli*
 - Increased leg pain, swelling, warmth or redness
 - Increased resting heart rate, shortness of breath, or chest pain
 - Urinary tract infection*
 - Fever over 38°C or 101°F, burning or increased frequency of urination
 - Nerve problems*
 - Inability to walk on toes or heels
 - Numbness, tingling, or weakness in the arms or legs
 - Poor balance, loss of bowel or bladder control

Please feel free to contact us if any questions or concerns arise. Dr. Bjerke's office can be reached at: (775) 786-3040. After hours, a surgeon or physician assistant on call will be available to help you.