



POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS:

Lumbar disc replacement or anterior lumbar interbody fusion:

Instructions:

- You can remove the top layer of the dressing on post-operative day 2.
- Keep the bottom layer of steri strips in place until your first post-op visit.
- If you were given an abdominal binder wear it until your first post op visit, you can remove it for showers.
- You may take a short shower starting post-operative day 1 but no bathing/swimming.
- Call our office to schedule your first post-op visit and X-Rays.
- You can move your low back in a gentle range of motion but avoid bending.
- You can restart your usual home medications the day after surgery.
- If you are taking the Medrol dose pak, do not also take another anti-inflammatory.
- Apply an ice pack to the incision area for 20 minutes every few hours for 3-5 days.
- Try to walk for at least 15-20 minutes every day, drink lots of water. Avoid eating meat, cheese and other constipating foods for several weeks. Take a little pain medication as possible.
- You can restart exercise at 3 weeks after release from Dr. Cuéllar.

Expectations:

- You will have a sore throat for the first several days.
- You will probably have some pain and numbness in the front of the thighs.
- You will have some pain in the groin with lifting your legs for the first few weeks.
- On average 75% of the pain is gone after 6 weeks and 95% is gone after 3 months but this varies among people. The recover after fusion is longer than after disc replacement.
- You may have some fluctuating nerve pain and numbness in the first few months.
- Some people get worse nerve pain in the legs about a week post-op and this may last for up to 3-4 months.
- You should not have new weakness, if you do, let us know.
- A low-grade fever is normal during the first week and this is not worrisome for an infection.

- Wound drainage is not normal, please inform us if this occurs.
- ***If you have abdominal distension, together with an inability to hold down oral food or drink, go to the emergency room.***

Posterior lumbar decompression/microdiscectomy:

Instructions:

- You can remove the top layer of the dressing on post-operative day 2.
- Keep the bottom layer of steri strips in place until your first post-op visit.
- You may take a short shower on post-operative day 1 but no bathing/swimming.
- Call our office and schedule your first post-op visit and X-Rays.
- You can move your low back in a gentle range of motion but avoid bending.
- You can restart your usual home medications the day after surgery.
- If you are taking the Medrol dose pak, do not also take another anti-inflammatory.
- Apply an ice pack to the incision area for 20 minutes every few hours for 3-5 days.
- You can restart exercise at 3 weeks after release/instructions from Dr. Cuéllar.
- If you had a microdiscectomy avoid bending, twisting and lifting more than 10 pounds for 6 weeks

Expectations:

- You will have a sore throat for the first several days.
- On average most of the pain is gone after 6 weeks but this varies among people.
- You may have some fluctuating nerve pain and numbness in the first few months.
- You should not have new weakness, if you do, let us know.
- A low-grade fever is normal during the first week and this is not worrisome for an infection.
- Wound drainage is not normal, please inform us if this occurs.

Posterior lumbar fusion:

Instructions:

- You can remove the top layer of the dressing on post-operative day 2.
- Keep the bottom layer of steri strips in place until your first post-op visit.
- You may take a short shower on post-operative day 1 but no bathing/swimming.
- Call our office and schedule your first post-op visit and X-Rays.
- You can move your low back in a gentle range of motion but avoid bending.
- You can restart your usual home medications the day after surgery.
- If you are taking the Medrol dose pak, do not also take another anti-inflammatory.
- Apply an ice pack to the incision area for 20 minutes every few hours for 3-5 days.

- You can restart exercise at 3 weeks after release from Dr. Cuellar.

Expectations:

- You will have a sore throat for the first several days.
- A solid fusion can take 6-12 months in some people and some back pain during this period is normal.
- You may have some fluctuating nerve pain and numbness in the first few months.
- You should not have new weakness, if you do, let us know.
- A low-grade fever is normal during the first week and this is not worrisome for an infection.
- Wound drainage is not normal, please inform us if this occurs.