



Ryan J. Hoel, MD

Care Coordinator Phone: 952-456-7423

Care After a Discectomy/Decompression

The following information will help you through your recovery at home.

PAIN:

- It is normal for you to experience some pain in the area of your incision after your surgery. Some of your leg pain may go away immediately after your surgery. Some of the pain will gradually decrease over the next few days or weeks depending on the amount of inflammation present in the nerve.
- Sometimes Dr. Hoel will place a steroid preparation on the nerve during surgery. This may help decrease the nerve inflammation for the first few days after surgery. If some of your leg pain returns 3 to 5 days after surgery it may be due to the steroid wearing off. The pain should not be as bad as your pre-op pain and will diminish over a period of weeks.
- You should call Dr. Hoel's office if your leg pain returns suddenly and does not improve over 24 hours.

ACTIVITY:

- You may increase your activity as tolerated; walking is the best form of exercise after spine surgery.
- For six weeks after surgery avoid bending, lifting, and twisting (BLT). Avoid activities such as vacuuming, raking and shoveling.
- Try to limit your lifting to 10 lbs during the first 2 weeks and then increase to 20-25lbs over the next 6 weeks.
- You may return to work approximately 1- 2 weeks after your surgery if you have a sedentary or desk type job. If you have a physical job Dr. Hoel and his staff will help you determine a return to work plan.
- You may resume sexual activity when you feel ready. Stop if you have pain.

DRIVING:

- You may drive if you feel strong enough and are not taking any narcotic pain medications.

INCISION SITE:

- It is ok to shower starting the day after surgery. You may allow the dressing to get wet. Do not immerse the incision in water such as (bath, pool, hot tub) for at least 3 weeks. Do not scrub the incision site while in the shower.
- Your incision is covered with steri-strips (narrow white tapes); they will get loose and fall off in 10-20 days. If they are still in place 3 weeks after surgery, you may remove them.

PAIN MANAGEMENT:

- Take your prescribed pain medication as needed and directed. Use Tylenol and Ibuprofen for your discomfort when you no longer need the narcotic pain medication.
- If you need a refill on your pain medication call 952-456-7423, please allow 24 hours for your prescription to be refilled, Dr. Hoel's office does not refill pain medications on Friday afternoons.

DIET:

- Eat a healthy diet; this will help your recovery.
- Drink plenty of fluids, water, milk or juice.
- If you have trouble with constipation you should eat more fiber, drink more fluids, increase your walking or try an over the counter laxative.

FOLLOW-UP VISITS:

- You should have a post-op appointment that was scheduled for you at the same time your surgery was scheduled. If you do not, please call Dr. Hoel's office when you get home from your surgery.
- Write down any questions you have about your surgery, recovery, return to work and other topics you wished to be covered at your post-op visit. This way, we will be able to address all of your questions at your next visit.
- Call Dr. Hoel's office if you have any questions or concerns.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR:

- If you have any redness, warmth or swelling at the incision site
- If your incision opens up
- If you have increasing drainage from your incision
- If you have a temperature greater than 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit