

## Frequently Asked Surgical Questions

### How do I schedule surgery?

- Dr. Wanderman's care team and TCO prior-authorization specialists will place the order to your insurance. Your insurance's review may take up to 15 days once received. Approval is pivotal to proceed with surgery.
- We will call you to schedule 1-2 weeks after your surgical consultation and to discuss your surgery insurance approval status.

### When will I know my surgery time?

- The pre-op team at the location where you are having surgery will reach out approximately 3-5 days before surgery to give you an exact arrival time, location, and details such as when to stop eating and drinking.

### I have FMLA or disability paperwork for me and/or my family member. Where can I send those for completion?

- Please fax any paperwork to 952-456-7956 or drop off at TCO Woodbury clinic. Make sure to include your name and date of birth. **DO NOT BRING THESE TO YOUR SURGERY.** You can expect your paperwork to be completed within two weeks.

### I am having a multi-level, posterior fusion and was prescribed a bone growth stimulator. What is this?

- In brief, the stimulator helps bones to fuse. You will use this device for about 6 months for 30 minutes a day. It is another tool that helps you have the best chance of a good outcome after surgery.
- You will receive a call or get a card in the mail from a representative at ENVOIS, if Dr. Wanderman prescribed one for you. The representative at ENVOIS will navigate getting a unit for you as well as guide you through how to use it.
- If insurance does not cover this device, you can choose if you would like to proceed with it or not. Many patients still have great outcomes without it. The bone stimulator is something that can only help.

### What if I was prescribed a brace for after surgery?

- Schedule an appointment with prosthetics and orthotics at TCO prior to your surgery.
- Bring the brace with you to your surgery. Dr. Wanderman will place this on you directly after the procedure.
- If you have questions or concerns regarding your brace including how it feels or fits, call the prosthetics and orthotics team at TCO for an adjustment appointment. They are very creative on how to make it work.
- Cervical collar pads: If replacement pads are needed, these can be purchased online at Amazon. Most often the brace you are fitted with is an Aspen Vista. This information will be on the brace.

### I am having surgery at a surgery center. When will I go home?

- If you are in the EXCEL program, you will have 1 night at the Omni care suites and will be discharged the next day.
- If you are having surgery at a surgery center and are not part of the EXCEL program, you will be discharged the same day.

### I am having surgery at the hospital. When will I go home?

- This varies greatly on the procedure being completed. This ranges from going home same day through a 3-4 day stay at the hospital.
- Transitional Care (TCU): Most patients do not need this. This is not something we can determine prior to your surgery. Before you are discharged from the hospital, a social worker will meet with you to discuss your options. In the hospital, you will also meet with physical therapy and other specialists that will make sure it is safe for you to discharge to the planned location whether it's to home or other rehabilitation facility.

**Do I need any special equipment to aid in my recovery?**

- No. If any additional equipment is needed, this will be determined and ordered for you by the hospital staff.

**What if a drain was placed during my surgery?**

- Drains are placed intraoperatively to help evacuate extra blood in patients who bled a bit more during the operation.
- The nursing staff will educate you on how the drain works.
- Drains will be removed at a TCO clinic by Dr. Wanderman's team the next day.

**Can I sleep in my bed?**

- Yes! Wherever you are most comfortable is great.

**When and how should I change my bandages?**

- On day 2 of being home, please change your bandages. You can replace with gauze and paper tape to keep the wound covered. Continue to change your bandages as often as needed to keep the incision dry. You can discontinue dressing if no drainage is present.
- If your wound is draining and soaking through your bandages, please call our team right away at 651-351-2612.

**How can I shower?**

- Do your best to avoid water contacting your incision.
- Do not get the incision soaking wet and dab to dry.
- If you are in a brace, it is ok to remove for a shower.
- No bath or submerged water for at least 4 weeks. Incision must be completely healed.

**When can I drive?**

- Recommended to have a driver to your 2-week post op appointment and discuss driving in your specific case at that time.
- You must be completely off all narcotics for 24 hrs. and have regained stamina and strength.

- If you had cervical surgery and are in a hard cervical collar, you cannot drive until you are graduated from the brace. (approximately 3 months)

**Do I need Physical Therapy?**

- Most patients do not need physical therapy after spine surgery. The best activity you can do to assist your recovery is taking daily, short walks.
- Dr. Wanderman's team will discuss with you at your post-op visits if physical therapy may be beneficial in your specific recovery.

**Help! I need a medication refill.**

- If you find yourself in need of a refill please call our team. Do your best to let us know 24 – 48 hrs. in advance. Remember to think about what you will need over the weekend.
- Our team cannot prescribe narcotic medication prior to surgery. After surgery, we will work with you to be off any narcotic medication as soon as possible. In some cases, you may be referred to a pain clinic.

**It is outside business hours, and I have questions. What can I do?**

- We are often out of the office on Friday afternoons between 2-3 pm.
- Please call TCO's main line number or press 0 when you get to our team voicemail to connect with an operator for triage.
- You do not need our blessing to go to the Emergency Department. If you are having major issues or concerns (heavy drainage, fever over 101, difficulty breathing, etc.) please go to the hospital for evaluation.

**When should I call my care team?**

- We are always happy to take your call regardless of the question or concern, but please review the list below of things we would particularly like to know about.
  - A fever of 101 or greater
  - Wound drainage, redness and/or warmth
  - Wound edges separating
  - Pain in your calf
  - New or worsening symptoms including but not limited to pain, weakness, numbness, and/or tingling.
  - Changes in bowel or bladder