



Nathan Wanderman, MD

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Post-Op Care After Discectomy/Decompression

PAIN CONTROL

- 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.
- It is very common to get a recurrence of your leg pain 1-7 days after surgery. Typically, this improves over the course of a few days. This is called bounce-back radiculopathy, and happens as the nerve swells as it starts to heal. Sometimes Dr. Wanderman will place a steroid preparation on the nerve during surgery which helps decrease the nerve inflammation. If your leg pain is severe, call Dr. Wanderman, and he will start you on a short course of oral steroids to help calm the nerve down.
- Take your prescribed pain medication as needed and directed. Use Tylenol and Ibuprofen for discomfort when you no longer need the narcotic pain medication.
- Typically, narcotic pain medication is needed only for the first 4-5 days after surgery, and nearly all patients no longer require narcotic pain medications by 2 weeks postop.
- If you need a refill on your pain medication call 952-456-7423, please allow 24 hours for your prescription to be refilled. Note that narcotic scrips must be printed and cannot be called in. Dr. Wanderman's office does not refill pain medications on Friday afternoons.

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. 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. Wanderman 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.
- You may resume driving once your strength returns and you are off all narcotic pain medications.

INCISION SITE

- Your skin is covered in skin glue. It is ok to remove the bandage 48 hours after surgery.
- It is ok to shower after the bandage has been removed. Let the water run over the wound, but do not soak it and pad it dry (don't rub with a towel). Do not immerse the incision in water such as (bath, pool, hot tub) for at least 6 weeks. Do not scrub the incision site while in the shower.
- The skin glue will get loose and fall off in 10-20 days
- Follow up visits:
 - You should have a 2 week post-op appointment that was scheduled for you at the same time your surgery was scheduled. If you do not please call Dr. Wanderman's office as soon as you get home.
 - Write down any questions you have about your surgery, recovery, return to work and other topics you wish 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 your doctor 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