

These instructions are designed to assist you with any problems or questions you might have after your discharge from the hospital. If you do not understand any of the following information or have any other questions or problems, please call our office at **256-327-7463 (256-32 SPINE)** or Toll Free **1-877-957-7463 (1-877-95 SPINE)**.

**Follow-Up Visits:** Patients are generally scheduled for post-op visits approximately one week after discharge from the hospital. Routine office visits are usually scheduled at one month, three months, and six months following surgery.

**Wound Care:** When you arrive home, if your wound is dry, you may remove the gauze dressing and leave it off. If the sutures or staples are a source of irritation, simply replacing the gauze should be adequate to keep this area comfortable. If there are any areas of the incision that are draining, keep these areas covered with gauze until the drainage has subsided.

**Signs and Symptoms of Wound Infection:** Observe your wound daily for any signs of possible infection. Look for redness, swelling, and tenderness around the incision. Any increase in drainage or change in the color or odor of any previous drainage is also of some concern. If you observe any of these symptoms or begin to run a fever (temperature greater than 102 degrees), please call our office immediately.

**Showers and Bathing:** If your wound is dry, you may take a shower. If you have continued drainage, sponge bathing is recommended. Avoid a tub bath until the sutures or staples are removed. If you will be home alone, you may need a shower stool in case you become tired or lightheaded.

**Activities:**

1. Avoid bending, heavy lifting, or any strenuous activity involving your back. Do not attempt to lift objects below the level of the knees or reach for objects above the level of the shoulders. When lifting any object, be careful to hold them close to your body and bend at the knees, not the waist.
2. Twisting motion and rotation of the spine are to be avoided at all times.
3. Riding in the car is allowed as tolerated from a comfort standpoint.
4. Sexual activity is permitted after your return home to the comfort level of the individual.
5. The first two months following discharge is a time for frequent rest and minimal activities.
6. After one week at home, a walking exercise program should be started and continued for the first three to six months.

**General Information:** If you run out of medicine before your first post-op visit, you may call the office for a refill. This must be done during office hours, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Unfortunately, we cannot refill medication after 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, on weekends or holidays.