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## CERVICAL SPINE SURGERY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

*Dear Patient:*

*The following instructions will help you in your recovery from your surgery. These are general instructions only.*

1. Generally driving is not permitted for 2-4 weeks after surgery, but specific restrictions should be discussed with your surgeon. Avoid long car trips and stop frequently to get out of the car and walk.
2. Walk outdoors or at a shopping mall daily. Gradually increase the distance each time you walk. Walking, however, should be the only physical exercise attempted until after your follow-up appointment with Dr. Taha. Walking up and down stairs is allowed; use a hand rail for support. Your activity should be guided by your pain or discomfort.
3. Sexual activity is discouraged until your follow-up visit.
4. Housework is NOT permitted (this includes using the vacuum, ironing, loading and unloading the dishwasher, washer or dryer) until your first post-operative visit.
5. Avoid bending your head backwards or doing any activity that requires bending your head or neck forward or backward. Do not lift anything heavier than 10 pounds, including a child.
6. You MAY be wearing a cervical collar (but only if Dr. Taha says that you need one). If you have been given a soft cervical collar, wear it when you are up walking around or riding in a car. If you have a hard cervical collar, wear it all the time. Both soft and hard cervical collars can be removed at night when sleeping.
7. **You may remove the large surgical dressing and shower 2 days after your surgery.** Do not submerge in a tub or pool until five weeks after surgery. \*\*Dr. Taha is recommending you use a special Wound Cream on your incision after you have been seen for your first post-op appointment and this can be purchased from WellnessOne Pharmacy (937)256-4000. (unfortunately insurance does not cover – it is usually priced at \$1000 but Wellness One is discounting to around \$90-100 for our patients).
8. Dermabond (glue) will remain in place when you leave the hospital. This should slowly flake off on its own over a period of about 2 weeks. We will inspect the wound when you come in for your first post-op appointment 1-1/2 to 2 weeks after surgery. Make sure this appointment has been scheduled.

9. If you regularly take pain medication to maintain your comfort, be aware that constipation may become a problem for you. To prevent this, use prune juice and/or bran cereals liberally. If you still become constipated for more than 2 days, please call our office to request Movantik (specifically for pain medicine induced constipation) or a stool softener. If you do get the Movantik there is a \$0 copay card at [www.movantik.com](http://www.movantik.com).

10. Hoarseness, a sore throat, or having difficulty swallowing may occur in the first two weeks. If your incision begins to separate or if you have signs of infection, redness, swelling, pain or drainage seeping from your incision, call Dr. Taha's office at (937)299-8242.

11. If you have had a fusion, you should avoid all non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like Aleve, Motrin, Advil, Ibuprofen, etc.). In addition, do not smoke since this will decrease your bones' ability to fuse and increase your chances for complications such as infection. Expect Dr. Taha to order serial x-rays postoperatively to assess the progress of your fusion.

12. Call 911 *IMMEDIATELY* if you experience breathing difficulty after surgery.

13. Call Dr. Taha *IMMEDIATELY* if you notice clear fluid seeping from the wound or if you experience severe headache.

14. Call Dr. Taha *IMMEDIATELY* if you notice significant swelling around the neck or if you develop severe hoarse voice or swallowing difficulties.

15. You may experience mild swallowing difficulty and a hoarse voice immediately and sometimes for ten weeks to months after surgery.

16. Call Dr. Taha *IMMEDIATELY* if you develop weakness in arms or legs or urinary incontinence that was not present immediately after surgery.

17. For at least 5 days after surgery, use ICE on your incision area 25 minutes at a time then take off for 45 minutes. Do this as often as possible to promote healing after surgery.

*These instructions have been designed to aid you in making a full and uncomplicated recovery. We ask you to follow these rules until you are seen in the office. At that time we will be able to evaluate your progress and advise you on further instructions. If you have any questions, please call Dr. Taha's office at (937)299-8242.*