

# **What to Expect after Your Lumbar Disc Replacement**

## **Things to Remember:**

- Avoid sitting for long periods of time
- A back brace has been provided for your comfort. Most patients find the brace provides good support and prefer to wear it for several weeks post op. It is best to wear the brace if you will be performing any physical activity.
- You can climb stairs. Use a handrail, and have someone with you.
- Slowly increase the amount of walking you do. Sit for short periods of time. Standing, walking, or lying down are going to be your best positions in the first weeks.
- No lifting over 10 pounds for six weeks.
- Pain medications can be constipating. Utilize over the counter laxatives and softeners while taking pain medications. Over the counter Senekot-S is a great option.

## **Pain**

- When you go home, narcotic pain medicine may be prescribed for you. Your pain will improve over the next 6-8 weeks. As your pain improves you will need to decrease the amount of pain pills you take.
- All pain medications should be taken with food and at least 8 ounces of water.
- Medication taken for pain will impede your ability to drive safely.
- Alcohol should not be used while taking medications.

## **Wound Care**

- You have dissolvable sutures, and will need to make your post-op appointment for six weeks after surgery. Be sure to keep the incision dry and covered.
- Bruising is common around the incision and genitals. This may last a week and will not cause any permanent problems.
- Avoid bathing, pools, or hot tubs until the incision is completely healed and there is no scabbing.
- Avoid showering for 3-5 days. When you resume showering keep incision covered and replace bandage after shower.
- Steri-Strips are small pieces of paper tape made to peel and fall off as the incision heals. It may take one to two weeks for all of the Steri-Strips to fall off. If the Steri-Strips have not fallen off after 2 weeks it is OK to peel them off.

## **Call Your Doctor if You Notice Any Signs of Infection.**

- Increased redness or swelling around incision.
- Changes in the amount, color, or odor of drainage from the incision.
- Fever greater than 102 degrees.

## **Work**

You may need to be off work for up to 6 weeks. It may be more or less time depending on the physical demands of your job. You and your doctor can discuss when you should return to work.

### **If You Have Any Questions Please Call:**

The Spine Institute at 970-669-8881 or if you live out of the area, please call 1-800-795-5487 with any questions. After hours, these numbers will connect you with the answering service who can page a doctor if necessary.