



(847) 303-1200

Illinois Spine Institute

Minimally Invasive Lumbar Discectomy Post-Operative Information

What to expect following surgery

Muscle spasms and back pain are expected after your surgery. Once the pressure is taken of the nerve(s), your leg pain, numbness / tingling, and weakness should improve. Usually the pain improves first, then the weakness, followed by the numbness / tingling. The back pain and spasms usually improve over the following 2-3 weeks – physical therapy may be started at this time to help.

A follow-up appointment should be made to see the doctor approximately one and two weeks following surgery. It is best if these are scheduled prior to the surgery.

Following surgery you should arrange to rest for the first week. Avoid lifting, bending/twisting, etc to help decrease the chance of recurrence of the disc herniation. One of the best exercises is to walk at least 3 times a day for at least 30 minutes each time. This will help to strengthen your back muscles and eliminate pain and spasms.

Return to work is variable and depends on the type of work you perform. The doctor will discuss this with you after your operation.

Incision care and dressings

You will have a small incision covered by a gauze and Tegaderm (a sticky plastic barrier). The incision will have dissolvable sutures below the skin, and may have skin glue applied over the top. There may be 2 small sutures outside of the skin that looks like small clear fishing line –if so, these will be removed in clinic. Keep the incision clean and dry. You may shower as long as the incision is covered by the Tegaderm dressing. The hospital will supply you with extras to take home.

The dressing should be changed after 2 days, or if it becomes wet or has discharge. To change the dressing remove the clear Tegaderm and gauze, apply a sterile dressing over the incision and apply a new Tegaderm dressing on top. This is done by removing the paper over the sticky portion and apply it over the top of the dressing on the skin, then peel off the attached paper rim and press to seal it to the skin.

Medication

You will be given medication prior to discharge. There will be one medication for muscle spasm, and one for pain. Take both as needed according to the directions. Resume your pre-operation medication when you return home, with the exception of medicine for pain and muscle spasm.

What to watch for

- Fever and or chills
 - Redness, warmth or discharge from the incision site
 - Changes in strength or sensation to your arms and or legs
 - Loss of bowel or bladder control or inability to urinate
- *Call our office immediately if you have any of these symptoms***

If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to call our office.

Thank you for choosing the Illinois Spine Institute

Your choice for comprehensive Spinal Care