

## Neuroscience Unit

# Post-operative Care after Cervical Disc Replacement

### Wound

There may be different types of sutures used for your wound

- Usually we will use dissolvable sutures in the neck and no removal is required. Any paper tapes on the wound will fall off in the shower;
- If we use staples or non-dissolving sutures on the wound, see your GP or practice nurse to have these removed, 7 days after surgery (10 days for your hip). Make sure you leave hospital with a staple remover. Some consultants request that you return to the ward to have your staples removed; you will be given these instructions on discharge;
- Try and keep the neck dry as much as possible;
- If you have staples or non-dissolving sutures on your wound, you may **walk** into a swimming pool, but do not swim for at least 3 months; you may take a bath once the clips have been removed but ensure that the wound is dried completely;
- For the first week after surgery, after every shower pat the wound dry and change the dressing;
- Do not put any creams on the wound.

### Collar

You may be placed in a cervical collar for 6 weeks. It can be taken off for showering.

### Exercises

You will be given guidance on an exercise programme. Usually this can start one week following surgery.



## Patient Information

- The best exercise is walking. Small amounts frequently are best. Follow the guidelines given to you by the physiotherapist in hospital.

**Do not bend your neck forward or bend your neck backwards.**

## Posture

- Take a break if you are sitting for more than an hour;
- Try and keep mobile by changing your position frequently;
- Do not lift more than 2kg (5lb) for the first 6 weeks after surgery;
- Avoid bending and lifting away from the body.

## Driving

It is advised not to drive for 6 weeks after surgery.

## Return to work

- We advise you to take 4 weeks off work after surgery;
- Light desk work can be commenced after this time. Please make sure your computer monitor is at eye level (put the yellow pages under it to lift it up) so no strain is put on your neck;
- Please wait until you are seen at your 6 week check after surgery before planning anything more strenuous than this.

## Pain Relief

- Pain killers can be taken for wound pain after surgery. Contact your GP for more painkillers if required;
- The wound pain should settle in 2-4 weeks;
- You may experience some numbness. This can take a while to recover from and some people may always have some numbness in this area;
- Pins and needles are not uncommon after surgery and should settle over time;
- Do not take any anti-inflammatories (e.g. Neurofen/ Voltarol) or aspirin for 10 days after surgery.

## Patient Information

### Problems

Contact your GP if the wound becomes red, swollen, painful or develops a discharge.

### Follow-up

- Please see your GP/practice nurse one week after surgery to have the wound checked;
- Whilst you are at the clinic some normal and bending, x-rays of your neck will be done;
- We advise you not to smoke as this compromises healing and may result in failure of the disc replacement.

**If you need any further information or clarification, please contact Ward 43 on Tel. 024 7696 5330 or 024 7696 8240.**

### Sport

Sport/fitness can be started again 6 weeks after the operation. In principle all sports are possible. Cycling can be taken up after 2-3 weeks; other sports should be built up gradually. You may **walk** into a swimming pool after 2-3 weeks, but do not swim for at least 3 months. If you are unsure, please ask at your clinic appointment or talk to your GP.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5208 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

#### Document History

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