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**DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING AN ANTERIOR CERVICAL ARTIFICIAL DISC PLACEMENT**

You had a surgical procedure called anterior cervical artificial disc placement. During this procedure Dr. Wilkerson made an incision on the front of your neck and removed your damaged disc(s). These instructions provide additional information regarding your care at home.

**Incision Care:**

- Starting 3 days after surgery, you may shower with mild soap or shampoo daily, gently washing your incision and pat dry. This is the only time you may touch your incision. Your incision was closed with absorbable sutures. Steri-strips were placed over the skin. They should remain in place for 1-2 weeks. The Steri-strips should be removed after 2 weeks if they are still in place.
- Do not apply ointments, lotions or creams to your incision.
- Apply an ice pack or a clean bag of frozen peas to your incision every 30 minutes to help reduce the swelling and discomfort, as needed.
- Occasional episodes of neck pain and arm pain are not unusual immediately after surgery.
- You may have discomfort in between your shoulder blades which is a common part of healing.

**Activity:**

- Start with light activity around the house for the first 3 days you are home.
- Gradually increase your activity starting with a short walk 1-2 times a day.
- Allow your body time to heal by resting for short periods during the day.
- Avoid contact sports, skating, bike riding or other activities for 6 weeks.
- You may **not** drive until instructed to do so by Dr. Wilkerson.
- Avoid lifting, pushing or pulling heavy objects (more than 10 lbs) for 4 weeks.
- Frequently move your head side to side and back and forth.
- Avoid sitting in soft chairs or slumping while you are sitting.
- Be sure to get up and move around/ stretch every 30 minutes while sitting.

**Nutrition:**

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables to prevent constipation.
- Warm liquids and soft foods are usually easiest to swallow after this surgery.
- A soft diet including: shakes, soup, pasta, soft vegetables, meat and breads will be easier to swallow for the first few days after surgery.
- A sore throat and softer voice is common for about 2-3 weeks after surgery. But you should be able to swallow food without difficulty and not choke or cough while eating or drinking.

**Medications:**

- **Take anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAID) daily as prescribed for at least 4 weeks.**

- Eat some food with your pain medications and use these medications sparingly to avoid nausea, vomiting or constipation.
- Take your pain medications as prescribed and gradually decrease these as your pain improves.
- You may need to take a stool softener (Colace) or a laxative (Dulcolax) that you can buy at a pharmacy until your bowels return to normal.
- You may need to use a suppository (Dulcolax or glycerin) or an enema if you have not had a bowel movement in 3 days.

**Follow Up:**

- Call Dr. Wilkerson's office when you get home to schedule your follow-up appointment.
- Follow up with your Primary Care Physician for all medical issues.

**Call your doctor or return to the emergency room if you experience any of the following:**

- Difficulty breathing or swallowing.
- Constipation- no bowel movement for more than 3 days.
- Difficulty moving or weakness of your face, arms or legs.
- Nausea or vomiting that won't stop.
- Your pain is not well controlled on your pain medications.
- **A fever above 100 F.**
- Redness, swelling, odor or drainage at your incision site.