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Intermountain Medical Center
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Park City Medical Center
Rosenberg/Cooley/Metcalf Clinic
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Discharge Information-ACDF

You are being discharged from the hospital today following an anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF). This sheet is to provide some information and guidelines for your care at home. Your body will need time to heal from surgery. Plenty of rest, adequate sleep, and proper nutrition are essential to heal. Please do not smoke any cigarettes. Your throat may be sore from the breathing tube used during surgery as well as the surgery itself. Throat lozenges may help reduce this minor discomfort. Softer foods and plenty of fluids may also be beneficial.

Keep your incision dry for 1 week. If it does get wet, use a hairdryer (low heat) to dry the area. Remove the outer bandage tomorrow, if it has not already been removed. The stitches are on the inside and are dissolvable. The steri strips keep the edges of the incision together. They need to stay dry for 1 week. Once they get wet, they will look dirty, and can be peeled off gently. The steri strips should be off by post-op day #10. Any scabs or dried blood that remains after the steri strips are off can be removed by using mild soap and water or ½ strength hydrogen peroxide (use equal parts hydrogen peroxide and sterile water—both can be found at any drug store, no prescription necessary).

Keep a close eye on your incision for any signs of infection. These may include redness, swelling, tenderness, fever, or discharge from the incision. If any of these occur, or if you have any questions or concerns about the incision please call our office promptly (801-507-9555).

If your fusion was one or two levels you will be given a soft neck collar/brace. This is to be used only as needed for your comfort. It does not need to be on all the time. If your fusion was more than two levels, then a hard cervical collar will be given. This collar needs to be worn at all times. It is okay to be removed to eat and shower. If the brace is bothersome to sleep, it can be removed if you are not sleeping on your stomach and if you do not “toss and turn” while sleeping. You will be discharged with appropriate medicines or prescriptions for medicines. One cannot expect to be pain free after surgery. It is common to have the same symptoms for which you had your operation for some time after the surgery. The medicines are meant to lessen, not eliminate, pain after surgery. The goal is to stop taking pain medications as soon as possible after surgery. Listen to your body and keep activity to a level that doesn't create excessive pain. Pain medications can cause drowsiness. You should not drive for 1-2 weeks following this surgery and do not drive at any time if you are taking pain medications, muscle relaxants, or wearing a hard collar. Some other pieces of information that would be good to keep in mind:

- Avoid repetitive motions that move the head up and down (looking to the ceiling/floor).
- Do not lift objects over your head.
- Avoid activities that could injure/jar the neck (sports/running).

Your follow-up appointment is as follows:

Intermountain Medical Center: _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Park City clinic: _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Please call 801-507-9555 for appointment date and time.

Please arrive 60 minutes early to have x-rays done. X-rays are done on the 2nd floor of the Eccles Outpatient Building (the building to the north of the South Office Building).

If you have any questions or concerns relating to your surgery or condition, please call our office. Someone will help you or they will contact us and we'll call you as soon as possible.

Charles C. Rich, MD
Dave Kotter, APRN