

Charles C. Rich, MD, PC

Intermountain Medical Center
South Office Building
5171 S Cottonwood Street, Suite #950
Murray, UT 84107
(801) 507-9555; fax (801) 507-9550

Park City Medical Center
Rosenberg/Cooley/Metcalf Clinic
900 Round Valley Dr., Suite #100
Park City, UT 84060
(435) 655-6600

Discharge Information-Lumbar Discectomy

You are being discharged from the hospital today following a lumbar (lower back) discectomy. 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. Throat lozenges may help reduce this minor discomfort.

Keep your incision dry for 1 week. Showering is okay, but you must cover/waterproof the incision/bandage. If it does get wet, use a hairdryer (low heat) to dry the area. Remove the outer bandage tomorrow (post-op day #2). 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). If your incision was closed with staples or regular sutures (strings visible), you need to call the office and set an appointment to have them removed.

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).

You may be given a back brace. This needs to be worn only as needed when you are up moving around. It is best to wean the use of the brace after the 3rd or 4th week but sooner is okay too. 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 any time if you are taking pain medications and/or muscle relaxants. Some other pieces of information that would be good to keep in mind:

- Avoid repetitive bending and twisting actions (getting in and out of a car).
- Do not lift things heavier than 20 lbs for approximately 1 month.
- Avoid activities that could injure your back (sports).
- In 1-2 weeks, you will probably be okay to drive a car as long as: 1) you are not taking pain medications or muscle relaxants, and 2) it is a short errand without multiple stops. It is the repetitive action of getting in/out of the car that you want to avoid.

Your follow-up appointment is as follows:

Intermountain Medical Center: _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Park City clinic: _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Please call for appointment date/time.

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.

Thank you,

Charles C. Rich, MD
Dave Kotter, APRN