

Charles C. Rich, MD, PC

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

You are being discharged from the hospital today following a lumbar (lower back) fusion. 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(s) dry for 7-10 days. Showering is okay, but you must cover/waterproof the incision. If it does get wet, use a hairdryer (low heat) to dry the area. The stitches are on the inside and are dissolvable. The steri strips keep the edges of the incision(s) together. They need to stay dry for 7-10 days. Once they get wet, they will start to curl up, and can then be peeled off gently. The steri strips should be off no later than two weeks after surgery. 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 for date/time to have them removed.

Keep a close eye on your incision(s) 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 questions or concerns about the incision(s), please call our office promptly (801-507-9555).

You will be given a back brace. It needs to be worn whenever you are not reclining or lying down. Do not wear the brace while in bed. You should expect to wear the brace for at least one month. At your follow up visit (discussed below) we will evaluate if you need to wear it longer. 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.

Some other pieces of information that would be good to keep in mind:

- Take it easy for a month. You're okay to do short walks outside and maybe an errand or two but do not drive.
- No bending, twisting, or lifting anything heavier than 20 lbs for 3 months.
- Avoid activities that could injure your back (sports, moving furniture) or that jar the back (jogging/running, horseback riding).

Your follow-up appointment is as follows:

Intermountain Medical Center: _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Park city clinic: _____ @ _____ am/pm.

Please call for appointment date/time.

Please call for date/time to have staples removed.

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

Thank you,

Charles C. Rich, MD
Dave Kotter, APRN