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## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER NECK SURGERY**

### **Post-op Pain**

It is not unusual to experience the following symptoms in the first few weeks after surgery.

1. Pain in and around the incision site.
2. Muscle tightness of the neck (bone graft site)
3. Some persistent arm/shoulder pain, weakness, or numbness
4. Mild swelling or redness at the incision
5. Pain on movement from bed to chair or standing position

Prescriptions for pain medicine will be given when you are discharged. Take the medication as needed and directed. Most patients require 3-4 days of narcotic pain relievers after surgery. Please avoid non-steroid anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen, naproxen and advil postoperatively.

### **Incision Care**

There are steri-strips (paper band-aids) holding the incision closed. There are no sutures to come out. They will dissolve.

1. Change the dressing daily for 5 days with 4x4 gauze and tape. After that, you may remove the dressing and let the incision air dry (leave steri-strips in place) or cover with an over-sized band-aid.
2. You may shower. If the dressing gets wet, change it. Do not soak the incision.
3. **No** ointments or solutions should be applied on the incision. Mild soap and water is okay.
4. If you develop blisters, redness or irritation from the tape, discontinue its use.

### **Post-Operative Neck Care**

The first week after surgery should be considered an extension of your hospital stay. If any activity increases discomfort, don't do it. Each day will get easier. Call the office 703 858-5454 to make an appointment with Dr. Santini in 7 days

1. Wear soft cervical collar for comfort. It may be taken off for shower activity. Do not extend your neck backwards.
2. You may walk as much as you comfortable can. You may climb stairs.
3. Do not remain confined to bed during the day.
4. Avoid bending, twisting, or lifting more than 5 lbs.
5. Avoid overhead activity.
6. You may ride in a car as a passenger.
7. Sexual activity is permitted whenever comfort permits.
8. Decisions regarding returning to work and physical therapy needs will be on an individual basis.

### **Call the Office**

We are here to help you. Please call at any time with any questions. Call the office if any of the following occurs:

1. Fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit by mouth
2. Drainage from the incision
3. Excessive pain or swelling at the neck (or bone graft site)