

## What to Expect After Surgery

You may still experience some of your pre-operative symptoms.

This is because the nerves can take a long time to heal and may still be sensitive immediately after surgery. As healing progresses and the initial inflammatory phase after surgery resolves, the nerve irritation will resolve. This may take weeks to months in certain circumstances. This is why we follow our patients up to a year after surgery.

The use of pain medicines can, and most likely will, cause constipation.

Please be sure to drink plenty of water and plan on using OTC remedies, such as Colace<sup>®</sup> and Milk of Magnesia<sup>®</sup> while taking your pain medications. If you have not had a bowel movement in 2 days, you can purchase and use a bottle of Magnesium Citrate from your local pharmacy. Follow dosage instructions on the bottle.

You may experience increased pain when you first get out of bed in the morning or when sleeping at night.

After surgery, your muscles respond by tightening up as part of the healing process. Therefore, staying in one position for an extended period of time allows the muscles to contract, thus causing pain and spasm. This usually resolves once the muscles are stretched out again. Studies show that being active out of bed will help this and will help avoid generalized deconditioning.

Your incision/s sites may drain for the first week or so after surgery.

This is common and expected and should lessen as you get further out from surgery. Be sure to keep the wound dry by changing the dressings at least once a day, more if needed. A wet dressing will breakdown the healing skin and may lead to delayed healing and possibly infection. You may shower 72 hours after surgery, but you must keep the wound dry. If you cannot keep the wound dry, please take a sponge bath until your first post-operative visit to discuss. Concerning signs include foul smelling drainage and a “tomato red” wound.

It is very common to have elevated temperatures post-operatively.

You may notice your body temperature fluctuating between 99-101.5 degrees. This is commonly due to the body's reaction to the trauma of surgery, as well as pain medicine causing slight changes in breathing by not allowing air sacks in the lungs to expand (atelectasis).

Use the breathing machine (if received during your hospital stay) or be sure to take a deep breath 10 times per hour while awake to aid in keeping the lungs healthy and they body temperature down.

It is very rare to develop a post-operative infection within the first 2 weeks after surgery. If you have sustained temperature greater than or equal to 101.5 or have concerns call our office to discuss.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 630-967-2225.