

## Discharge Instructions

The patient having spine surgery usually has many questions when planning home recovery. Hopefully the **Do's, Don'ts** and **Additional Suggestions** listed below will help to answer some of your questions.

Please refer to the specific Discharge Activity Sheet that we give you, and the precaution section of this book.

**Do** wear loose clothing that allows free movement of your legs.

**Do** keep your body in proper alignment.

**Do** use pillows between your legs, when turning in bed or laying on your side, for six weeks after surgery.

If your doctor allows, **Do** sit in a firm straight-backed chair with arms. This type of chair helps maintain good body position and alignment and makes standing and sitting easier. **Don't** sit for longer than 20-30 minutes at a time.

**Do** walk as much as you can, but avoid becoming too tired.

**Do** try to limit your stair climbing for six weeks after your surgery. If your home has stairs, try to limit climbing stairs to 1-2 times each day.

**Do** ask your doctor when sexual activity may be resumed.

**Do** continue to wear your elastic stockings as instructed by your doctor.

**Do** keep your incision dry. **Don't** apply any lotion or soap to the incision.

**Do** ask your doctor when you may take a tub bath or a shower.

**Do** call your doctor if you have any questions about your medications or are unable to take your medications.

**Do** continue with follow-up care after discharge. Call the doctor's office and schedule an appointment before you leave the hospital. Often this saves a long distance call. The nursing staff can assist you with this.

**Don't** drive a car until your doctor says you can!

**Don't** lift anything greater than 5 pounds until your doctor gives you permission.

## When To Call The Doctor

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- any loss or change of feeling, or numbness in your limbs.
  - If you had neck surgery; any loss or change of feeling in arms or legs.
  - If you had back surgery; any loss or change of feeling in your legs.
- any pain or tenderness in your calf, chest pain, or difficulty breathing.
- increased swelling of your legs (elevate your legs whenever you are not walking).
- a temperature of 101° or higher (check your temperature in the morning and in the evening, more often if you feel warm).
- increase in redness, tenderness, and/or swelling around your incision
- any new or increased drainage from your incision line or wound.
- an increase in pain not relieved with pain medication or rest. Your pain should decrease from day to day.
- any problems with bowel movements or urination