

TOWN CENTER ORTHOPEDIC ASSOCIATES- Dhruv B Pateder, MD

General Post-Operative Recovery

- It is normal to feel fatigued after surgery. Depending on your specific procedure, this may last for several hours to several weeks
- You may travel in a car, train or airplane as soon as you are able to tolerate it. “Blood clots are generally much less after spinal surgery compared to other surgeries (hip, knee and foot surgery). However, in order to further minimize the risk of “blood clots,” it is very important that you stand up and walk if you are going on a trip lasting more than one hour
- It is not unusual to have a low grade fever (less than 101.5 degrees) for several days after surgery. Please call our office if the fever is greater than 101.5 degrees and/or it is associated with drainage from or increasing redness around the incision (it is normal to have a 2-3 mm rim of redness around the incision; this is generally stable and does not increase over time).
- Walking and doing as many of your activities of daily living as possible is generally a very good thing and will help hasten your recovery.
- Use narcotic pain medication only if you are having pain. Do not use it if your pain is tolerable. On the other hand, feel free to use pain medication if you are having pain. There is no sense in racing to get off the pain medication if you are still in significant pain.
- Muscle relaxers such as Robaxin, Flexeril and Valium can be effective in relieving the spasms and “tightness” that patients experience after surgery. Once again, only use this if you are experiencing these symptoms. These medications may cause drowsiness- a side effect that may be beneficial if you are having trouble sleeping after surgery.
- You do not have to continue wearing the TED stockings after surgery if you are up and moving around in your home
- Use the incentive spirometer (plastic breathing device) as much as possible for the first week after surgery. While there are no rules on the frequency of use, we recommend trying to use it once every couple of hours
- It is normal to experience a loss of appetite after surgery. However, it is important that you obtain as many calories as you can. If you are unable to eat, drink high calorie shakes (Ensure, Boost, etc.) in order to acquire the proper nutrition.
- One of the most common problems after surgery can be constipation. This is typically caused by narcotic medications. It is very important that you eat a high fiber diet after surgery.

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Laxatives are also encouraged if you have not had a bowel movement for more than a couple of days after surgery.

- We generally do not start outpatient physical therapy until after your first post-operative visit. A prescription will be provided to you at that time. Until that time, we want you to walk as much as you can tolerate
- Do not soak the incision for at least 2 weeks or until it is completely healed