

Preparing for Your Spine Surgery Checklist

Getting ready for spine surgery: Over the next month or so you will meet many people who will assist you in understanding the entire process of your surgery. Your comfort and safety are our primary concern. We know getting you home quicker will speed your recovery.

Take care of yourself: Eating properly with a diet full of fruits, vegetables and protein as well as getting enough sleep is important. Minimize your risk for infections by limiting your exposure and practice proper hand hygiene. Other suggestions to maintain your health include avoiding tobacco and alcohol. A positive mental attitude and post-operative support is key to a successful surgery.

1 month before surgery:

You and your doctor will be deciding on the best approach for you. This will include but not limited to the type of device and approach. Expect to go home **2 days** after your surgery, but your neurosurgeon will give you more specific information on your length of stay based on your specific procedure. Studies show getting back to your home allows for improved mobility and decreased infection.

Schedule to attend the Spine Surgery Education Class by calling 847.990.5555.

3 weeks before surgery:

• Schedule and meet with your primary care physician

- An evaluation called a history and physical is needed to make sure you are able to undergo surgery.
- It often is recommended to undergo some cardiac, respiratory and sleep tests to make sure you are healthy for surgery. Lab tests will be part of this process
- Understand what medications you will need to stop before surgery and which ones you will need to continue.
- If you do not have a primary care physician, we will refer you to one of our hospitalist to perform a history and physical and to make sure you are ready for your surgery.

*Contact Health Advisor, Advocate Health Care's Physician Referral Service, at 1-800-3-ADVOCATE (1-800-323-8622) to find a physician in your area, or visit our website at advocatehealth.com/condell.

*Please remember your history and physical is only good for 30 days.

• Choose your coach

- Make arrangement for someone to stay with you 24 hours per day for 3 to 5 days after you return home. For your safety they should be able to help you get in and out of a chair and your bed and up and down stairs.
- Your spine coach should be physically able to help you at home.
- Your spine coach needs to attend the spine education class and be available the day of your surgery so they understand the procedure.
- After surgery you are to lift no more than 10 pounds. Your spine coach can assist with grocery shopping and lifting/moving normal objects that can cause pain.

• Contact your insurance company to understand your benefits

- You are expected to be in the hospital 2 days or less. Your surgeon will discuss this with you.
- Most of our patients go directly home and have outpatient therapy some weeks after surgery.

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2 weeks before surgery:

- Attend the spine education class (2 weeks prior if not sooner.)
- Start any exercises your physician and/or therapists have instructed you to do.
- Complete the nurse navigator phone interview to review your medication and medical history.
 - *if you have not heard from nurse navigation two weeks before your surgery, please call **847-990-5555**.
- Monitor and record your blood sugars if you are diabetic.
 - * If you will need a brace after surgery, your surgeon's office will arrange a fitting and **you are to bring the brace the day of your surgery with you to the hospital.**

Prepared your home:

- Check with your doctor regarding use of a walker.
- Secure handrails on all stairs.
- Place no-slip mats in the bathroom and shower.
- Place frequently used kitchen objects within reach.
- Start preparing and freezing nutritious meals, and package them in serving-size portions.
- Stock up on all household essentials.
- Place a straight-back armchair without wheels in the room in which you plan to spend the most time.
- Make sure your bed is at a height suitable for you to get in and out without steps or risers.

5 to 7 days before surgery:

- Discontinue your blood thinners **as instructed by your primary care physician.**
- Stop all medications **as you were instructed by your primary care physician.**
- Stop dietary supplements **if you were instructed to do so.**
- Have all your prescriptions filled before surgery, including any that were given to you pre-operatively and your regular medications.
- Based on lab results, you may receive instructions to start a 5-day nasal antibiotic treatment.
- Any new post-operative prescriptions will be given to you or called in to your pharmacy before discharge. Pack for the hospital
 - Walking shoes
 - Comfortable clothes and robe
 - Personal care items

3 days before surgery:

- Call your physician if you become ill, have a fever, a rash or have last-minute questions.
- Follow all of the instructions given to you about your hospital arrival time.
- Complete all medical clearances. If this is not complete, please contact your surgeon or:

3 days before surgery continued:

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- Shower with Hibiclens, the liquid antibacterial soap provided to you at the spine class.
 - Avoiding face and private areas.
 - Use a clean towel with every shower.
 - Rinse thoroughly.

Evening before Surgery:

- Remove all nail polish.
- Eat or drink nothing after midnight before your surgery date/time.
- Change your bed sheets.
- Shower with Hibiclens, the liquid antibacterial soap provided to you at the spine class.
 - Avoiding face and private areas.
 - Use a clean towel with every shower.
 - Rinse thoroughly.

Morning of Surgery:

- Shower again with the Hibiclens, the liquid antibacterial soap provided to you at the spine class.
 - Avoiding face and private areas.
 - Use a clean towel with every shower.
 - Rinse thoroughly.
- Arrive on time, at the designated time nurse navigation instructed you to arrive.
- Take medications as you have been instructed.
 - ***DO NOT** take medication that you were told to stop on the day of surgery.
 - Bring a current medication list (include prescription, over-the-counter and herbals.)
- Bring your ID and insurance card.
- Bring your CPAP machine and mask if you use one.
- Leave all valuables/money at home.
- Bring this checklist the day of your surgery.**
- Bring your MRI disc the day of your surgery, or your surgery may be cancelled.**

After surgery checklist

Hospital recovery:

- Tell your nurse when you are in pain.
- Pain with movement is expected after surgery.
- Expect to get out of bed the day of surgery.
- Take your pain medication before physical activity and before it becomes unbearable.
- Plan to be transitioned to home within 2 days of your surgery.
- Plan to sit in a chair for meals.
- A hospital associate will be with you in the bathroom



Advocate Condell Medical Center

If you have any questions regarding preparing for your surgery, please call the Advocate Condell Medical Center neuroscience coordinator at 847-990-5555.

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