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DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR LUMBAR DECOMPRESSION/MICRODISCECTOMY

It is important to me that you fully understand your postoperative instructions to fully maximize your chances of a successful recovery, minimize the risk of complications, and get back to doing the things you really enjoy!

1. **Bandage:** You may remove the bandaid/dressing over the incision 24 hours after your surgery. You will have Dermabond or staples over the incision. The dermabond glue should peel off on their own 7 days after the surgery. Please remove them at that time if they have not peeled off. Please be sure that you wash your hands thoroughly before touching your incision.

If you have staples or stitches and you do not have an appointment to see us in 10-14 days, please call us @ **541.284.0538**.

2. Keep the incision area clean and dry. You may shower for 5 min on the 3rd day after surgery with the incision area facing away from the shower stream. After you shower, pat the wound dry and keep it clean. Do not soak in a bathtub, hot tub, or swim until you are instructed otherwise. **Do not put anything on the incision including ointments or creams.**
3. If the incision area becomes red, swollen, hot, extremely tender, or if it begins to drain fluid or blood, please contact our office immediately.
4. **Exercise/Restrictions:** Your only exercise during the first week following your surgery should be leisurely walking. This should be on ground level only; no hiking. Walk 2-3 times a day (10-15 min) on level ground followed by a 3-5 minute rest. You may walk up and down stairs if needed. Do not perform back exercises until you are authorized to do them by my office or physical therapist. Do not do any physical activities or contact sports unless specifically authorized to do so by me.
5. During the first three months after surgery you should limit lifting to 5-10 pounds. Any increase in your lifting limit should be authorized by me. Avoid any activities that put stress on your back such as bending, twisting, stooping, pushing, or pulling.
6. **Driving:** No driving for 2 weeks or during continued use of pain medication. You may find that driving for over 15-20 minutes at a time will cause increase in

back pain in that first few weeks after surgery. This should gradually improve over time.

7. Avoid prolonged sitting the first 2-3 weeks after surgery. You may sit for meals and in the bathroom. If you are planning on reading or watching television, for example, it is preferable to either stand, recline, or at least alternate positions from sitting every 15-20 minutes. This too will gradually improve over time.
8. Do not return to work without approval from me.
9. **Common Symptoms:** In the first few weeks after surgery, it is not unusual to experience persistent leg pain, numbness or tingling of the leg or foot, mild swelling or redness at the incision site. You may also experience pain and muscle spasms around the surgical site or in your lower back for several days to weeks after surgery. Symptoms that are generally ok are sharp but intermittent pain that is not worsening, and pain that is transient and occur with changing positions.
10. If you had muscle weakness or numbness in the legs before surgery, these symptoms may take several weeks to months to improve.
11. **Medication:** Your medications are prescribed to you to be taken “as needed”. This means that if you are not experiencing any significant pain, you need not take any. You are not placing yourself in any danger by not taking these medication. On the other hand, if you feel you are significantly uncomfortable, please do not exceed the directions on the bottle unless specifically directed. Most pain medications have Tylenol (Acetaminophen) in them. Do not take any additional Tylenol or generic acetaminophen, as too much may harm your liver.
12. If you have been on narcotic pain medication such as: Oxycontin, Oxycodone, Kadian, MS Contin, or Fentanyl patches prior to your surgery, please do not stop them abruptly. You will need to be tapered off of these medications gradually by us or by a pain doctor to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptoms include chills, goosebumps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
13. **Medication Refills:** If you require medication refills, please call the office during business hours which are between 8:00-5:00 Monday through Thursdays or call your pharmacy. Please note that we normally have a 48 hour turnaround. Also note that we are unable to refill any medications on Friday, weekends or holidays.

If you live outside of Eugene, some post op pain medication such as Tylox or Percocet, require a written prescription. These medications cannot be called in to your pharmacy. These will require us to mail the prescription to you, so allow extra time for refills.

14. **PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE: If you have any signs of infection (fever, chills, extreme soreness, redness, or drainage of the incision. If you have significantly increased pain not relived by your pain medications, difficulty walking, and difficulty passing your urine or moving your bowels.**

If you have any other questions or concerns not covered in these instructions, please feel free to call the office at 541.284.0538.