



ENDOSCOPICALLY ASSISTED MICRODISCECTOMY – POST OPERATIVE CARE

Post-Operative Care

Most patients are able to go home the same day or early the next day after surgery. Before patients go home, physical therapists and occupational therapists work with patients and instruct them on proper techniques of getting in and out of bed and walking independently. Patients are instructed to avoid bending at the waist, lifting (more than five pounds), and twisting in the early postoperative period (first 2-4 weeks) to avoid a strain injury or recurrent disc injury. Patients should try to avoid sitting in the same position for more than 45-60 minutes in the first few weeks after surgery. After sitting for 45-60 minutes, patients should get up and stretch or walk for a little bit, then sit down again if desired.

Brace

Patients are generally not required or recommended to wear a back brace after surgery. Occasionally, patients may be issued a small, soft lumbar corset that can provide additional lumbar support in the early postoperative period, if necessary.

Wound Care

The wound area can be left open to air. No bandages are required. Small surgical tapes affixing the suture should be left in place. The area should be kept clean and dry.

Shower/Bath

Patients can shower immediately after surgery, but should cover the incision area with a small bandage and tape, and try to avoid water hitting directly over the surgical area. After the shower, patients should remove the bandage, and dry off the surgical area. Small surgical tapes affixing the suture should be left in place. Patients should not take a bath until the wound has completely healed, which is usually around 2 weeks after surgery.

Driving

Patients may begin driving when the pain level has decreased to a mild level, which usually is between 2-10 days after surgery. Patients should not drive while taking pain medicines (narcotics). When driving for the first time after surgery, patients should make it a short drive only and have someone come with them, in case the pain flares up and they need help driving back home. After patients feel comfortable with a short drive, they can begin driving longer distances alone.

Return to Work and Sports

Patients may return to light work duties as early as 1-2 weeks after surgery, depending on when the surgical pain has subsided. Patients may return to heavy work and sports as early as 4-6 weeks after surgery, if the surgical pain has subsided and the back strength has returned appropriately with physical therapy.

Doctor's Visits and Follow-Up

Patients will return for a follow-up visit in approximately 8-10 days after surgery. The incision will be inspected and assessed. Patients will be given a prescription to begin physical therapy for back exercises, to start 3-4 weeks after the surgery. Medications will be refilled if necessary.

Results and Outcome Studies

The results of microdiscectomy surgery in the treatment of a painful, herniated disc are generally excellent. Numerous research studies in medical journals demonstrate greater than 90-96% good or excellent results from microdiscectomy surgery. Most patients are noted to have a rapid improvement of their pain and return to normal function.