DR. MOHAMED J.H. AL-AMOODI
SPINE SURGEON

PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS

These are our standard instructions after spine surgery. If anything your surgeon or surgical team told you is different, always follow what they told you.

Activity

- **Walk as much as you can.** Walking is one of the best things you can do for your recovery — start with short, frequent walks and go a little farther each day.
- **Do NOT bend, twist, or lift more than 15 pounds** (about the weight of 1½ gallons of milk) until your surgeon tells you otherwise.
- Avoid strenuous exercise, sports, and heavy housework or yard work until you are cleared at a follow-up visit.
- Take breaks between sitting and standing — avoid staying in one position for a long time.
- **No driving for 6 weeks**, and never while taking prescription pain medicine.
- Sexual activity: avoid bending or twisting your back or neck. Return to work will be discussed at your follow-up visit.
- If you were given a brace or collar, wear it exactly as your surgical team showed you.

Diet

- Eat your regular diet as tolerated — start with light foods if you feel sick to your stomach, and drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat extra fiber and drink extra fluids to prevent constipation, especially while taking pain medicine.

Incision & Wound Care

- **Keep your incision dry — no showering, swimming, hot tubs, or baths** until your 2-week wound check.
- You may gently clean around (not directly on) the incision with a damp washcloth or wet wipe.
- **Leave your dressing in place** until your 2-week wound check. Only change it if it is soaked through or falls off.
- Do not put lotions, ointments, or powders on the incision.
- A small amount of clear or light-pink drainage in the first few days can be normal — it should get less, not more.

Medications

- Take pain medicine only as prescribed and only as needed — try to cut down as you feel able, and stop as soon as you comfortably can.
- Pain medicine can cause drowsiness, constipation, and slow reaction time — **do not drive, operate machinery, or drink alcohol** while taking it.
- Take a stool softener or gentle laxative (such as senna) while using pain medicine.
- Restart your regular home medicines as your surgeon instructed, unless you were told to hold one.
- **If you had a disc replacement:** keep taking celecoxib 200 mg twice a day with food for 2 weeks after surgery — it stops extra bone from growing around the new disc.

Unless your surgeon prescribed them for you, no antibiotics and no blood thinners are needed after this type of surgery.

WARNING SIGNS — go to the nearest ER or call 911 right away for any of these:

- Fever of 38 °C (100.4 °F) or higher, chills, or signs of infection (more redness, swelling, warmth, or pus from the incision, or the incision opening up)
- New or worsening weakness or numbness in your arms or legs
- New loss of bladder or bowel control, or numbness in the groin / inner thighs
- Severe or rapidly worsening pain that your medicine does not control
- A severe headache that is much worse sitting up or standing and better lying flat, or clear fluid draining from your incision (possible spinal fluid leak)
- Calf swelling or pain, or new shortness of breath / chest pain (possible blood clot)
- After neck surgery: trouble breathing or swallowing, or major neck swelling

Follow-Up Appointments

- **Our clinic will call you** to schedule both visits.
- **2 weeks after surgery:** wound check
- **6 weeks after surgery:** visit with your surgeon, including standing X-rays

Mohamed Al-Amoodi, MD

Spine Surgeon