

## **SPINAL SURGERY INFORMATION**



### **BEFORE SURGERY:**

- If your operation is booked for a morning theatre list you will usually be admitted the evening before.
- Please bring all your routine medication with you.
- **N.B - Please bring your recent x-rays / CT / MRI scans.**

### **FOLLOWING SURGERY:**

- The first night following surgery will be spent in general high care / ICU. This is normal – do not be concerned.
- Your bowels usually work slowly for 24 – 48 hours following surgery – you will not be allowed to eat or drink much during this time. You may not have a bowel action for 3-4 days – this is normal!
- You are likely to have a urinary catheter and a wound drain – these are usually removed on 2<sup>nd</sup> day post operatively.

### **DO'S AND DON'TS:**

- A physiotherapist will teach you the correct method to get out of bed - this must be strictly followed. The fused spine must be kept in proper alignment - you will be taught how to move properly, sit, stand, and walk.
- An elastic corset may be prescribed – if so, this is to be worn at all times when you are out of bed, usually for 4-6 weeks.

- Sitting upright must be limited to short periods only e.g. 5-10minutes, during the first 6 weeks post-op.
- You should not drive for 6 weeks following surgery.
- Travelling overseas should be avoided for at least 3 months and locally for at least 6 weeks post-operatively if possible.
- Avoid smoking- interferes with the bone fusion!
- Avoid excessive anti-inflammatory use – interferes with bone fusion.
- Keep active – short walks frequently during the day is best.

#### **DISCHARGE:**

- You will usually be able to go home approximately 5-7 days post-operatively.
- Surgical staples are removed at 10-14 days – you may have this done by your general practitioner, nursing sister or at my rooms. If absorbable sutures have been used, the dressing can simply be removed 2 weeks post-operatively.
- **Follow up appointments:**
  - \* 4 weeks after surgery and
  - \* 3 months with x-ray

#### **REMEMBER:**

- *Be careful! – **avoid bending, twisting and lifting**.* Any instrumentation e.g. screws and rods, are simply maintaining the spine in correct alignment while the bone fuses – any excessive movement may result in loosening of the screws or even breakage of screws and rods.
- Solid fusion takes approximately 6-9 months and sports are to be avoided during this time.
- Leg pain usually resolves quite quickly following surgery but you may experience discomfort in the lower back for several months
- Any numbness or weakness which was present before surgery is likely to take several months to resolve.
- If you experience any of the following please contact me immediately:
  - a. Fever
  - b. Excessive oozing from the wound. (slight oozing during the first week is normal)
  - c. Increasing weakness, numbness or leg pain.

#### **AND FINALLY....**

**Please ensure that you fully understand your proposed surgery prior to admission.**

**If you have any queries or require further information please do not hesitate to contact me in my rooms**

**Dr Mike Coleman  
Orthopaedic Surgeon**