

Patient Information Sheet

ALIF (ANTERIOR LUMBAR INTERBODY FUSION)

1. **NO** lifting more than 5 pounds, no bending or twisting at the waist. Sedentary activity (walking) only for the first 6 weeks.
2. No prolonged upright sitting, use a recliner whenever possible instead of straight-backed chairs. **Avoid low chairs!** Many people find lift chairs very helpful. A stool riser on your toilet at home may also be very helpful.
3. Wear brace when out of bed, may be removed for showering or opened while sitting in recliner. The brace will typically need to be worn for the first 6 weeks.
4. The dressing comes off the 2nd day after surgery. Keep wound dry at all times. Call in the next few days to set up an appointment.
5. Call if there is any wound drainage or an increase in redness or swelling.
6. No driving for 4-6 weeks, then only when not on pain medications.
7. Pain medications will be constipating, it may be very helpful to use a bulk laxative or fiber preparation, avoid straining.
8. Please make sure you have enough pain medication to last over the weekend; we will not refill prescriptions then. Monday thru Friday if you need a refill call your pharmacy, they will then contact our office requesting the refill for you.
9. You may typically expect to return to sedentary work or light duty at 6 weeks, with full return to work at 8-16 weeks possible. However, it may take 1 year or more for full release from care. You will be getting routine x-rays of your spine to assess the fusion process with each follow up visit during that time.

PLEASE NOTE

Your doctor strongly urges you to refrain from the use of **any tobacco** products during your recuperation. Even occasional use will suppress or even prevent bony healing, leading to chronic pain. Anti-inflammatories such as aspirin and ibuprofen can have a similar effect and should be avoided. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is OK.

Excessive activity in the recuperative period can also have a detrimental effect to bony healing. Walking on a daily basis to keep up tone in your legs (strolling, not power walking) is fine. Try to avoid excessive in and out of your chair. That act puts a great deal of strain on your hardware.

Narcotic medications (such as Vicodin, Lortab, hydrocodone, Percocet, Oxycodone, MS-Contin, etc.) are not only addictive but results in what is called drug tolerance. Drug tolerance is when a medication loses its effectiveness. Narcotic tolerance can make it difficult or even impossible to control pain. Therefore, we urge patients to wean off narcotics as soon as possible postoperatively and to minimize use preoperatively.

