PATIENT PRE-OPERATIVE EDUCATION: SPINE PROGRAM

Hartford Hospital
Anatomy

- Vertebrae
- Spinal cord & nerves
- Muscles & ligaments
- Intervertebral disks

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQFx9j7jwol
Preparing for Spine Surgery

- Medical evaluation will be done at the PREPARE Assessment Center or with your primary care physician
  - Physical exam, blood tests, imaging exams & EKG
- Anesthesia clearance is vital to the surgical procedure; Anesthesia questionnaire is completed prior to surgery
- Bring up to date medication list to be reviewed at your pre-op visit
- If indicated you will need to stop smoking at least 6 weeks before surgery & complete cessation after surgery
  - Smoking can slow healing process & increase risk of complications
  - Insurance companies, at times, require specific nicotine-testing lab work
- **Do not eat or drink** after midnight day before surgery
Day of Surgery

- You will receive a call 1-business day prior to surgery to provide you with your surgery time.
- Report to HH through the Admitting Office (80 Seymour Street) at least two (2) hours before the time of your scheduled surgery. Valet parking is available at the main entrance of HH.
- If you are having surgery at the Bone & Joint Institute (32 Seymour Street), valet parking is available in front of BJI.
- Pre-operative area
  - RN will review medical information and consent for surgery.
  - Anesthesiologist review.
- You will be brought to the Operating Room on a stretcher ~30-60 minutes before your scheduled operative time.
PREPARING FOR SURGERY
What to Bring Day of Surgery

- Two forms of Identification
  - Picture Identification
  - Insurance Cards
  - Note: if received copy from Prepare Clinic bring that instead

- Eyeglasses, Hearing Aids, Denture-Cases

- CPAP/BiPap Mask and Machine (not mandatory)

- Clothing/Footwear
  - Loose fitting clothes (shorts)
  - NO open back shoes
  - Slip resistant (rubber sole)
  - Special shoes (diabetic)
What Not to Bring

Valuables
After Your Surgery

- You will go to the **Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)** for 2-3 hours
- You will receive medication for pain control, to prevent infection & to ease muscle spasm
- You will be allowed to eat & drink following medical clearance
- You will wear “compression boots” to avoid the potential for blood clot formation
- You will learn how to:
  - Use an incentive spirometer to prevent risk for pneumonia
  - Mobilize with the care and assistance of a nurse and/or physical therapist
  - Turn and reposition in bed using the appropriate back precautions
- **Hospital stay: Varies 0 to 3 days depending upon the procedure**
  - Inpatient Physical Therapy
    - Functional Activities (i.e. stairs, walking, repositioning, sit)
    - At home safety check (can be arranged through home care/outpatients rehabilitation before or after surgery)
Post-surgical Back & Spine Precautions

- Maintain a neutral spine position
  - Use brace *(if prescribed by doctor)* when out of bed

- Use proper log rolling technique to transfer
  - Maneuver allows your entire body to move as a unit
  - Avoid twisting of spine
  - Video: [How to Log Roll](#)

- Place pillow between knees when lying on side
- Place pillow under knees when lying on back
- Sit in chair for all meals 15-30 minutes
- No lifting >5-10lbs (~1 gallon of milk)
- **Do NOT** twist, bend or cross your legs for up to 6 weeks
  - No bending at waist past 70°
- **Do NOT** get incision site wet/keep dressing dry & intact
DME (Durable Medical Equipment)

- **TLSO/LSO Bracing**
  - Custom/Measured for specific fit/comfort
  - May be arranged prior to or during the hospital stay

- **Walking enabling devices (rolling walker, cane, walking stick)**
  - Arrange prior to surgery OR= goal
  - May also be ordered when an inpatient (typically insurance-covered)
  - Physical Therapy assessment indicates appropriate device

- **Toilet Accessibility**
  - Commode OR Raised Toilet Seat
  - Assessed pre-operatively or during hospital stay
Transitions

- Average stay in the hospital is 0-3 days

- GOALS
  - Return home from hospital
  - Home care services as indicated
  - Understand barriers to safety at home
  - Provide resources for support services/DME
  - If SNF/Rehab stay, preferred partner SNFs offered

- Transportation
  - If going home, arranged with family
  - If going to rehabilitation setting, arranged by hospital
Important Warning Signs
1st few weeks post-surgery

**Blood Clot**
- Swelling in calf, ankle or foot
- Tenderness or redness, which may extend above or below knee
- Pain in the calf
- Extreme chest pain/shortness of breath
- Signs/Symptoms of Stroke
- F.A.S.T.
  - Facial droop, Arm weakness, Slurred speech and Time (act quickly)

**Infection**
- Redness, tenderness, & swelling around wound edges
- Drainage from the wound
- Extreme pain or tenderness
  - More than usual post-op discomfort
- Shaking chills
- Elevated temperature ($\geq 100.5^\circ$F)

*If any of these symptoms occur, you should contact your surgeon or return to the hospital ED
Follow-up Appointment

- 10 days to 4 weeks surgeon follow-up (MD-specific)
  - Repeat x-ray (if indicated)
  - Pain medication will be tapered/decreased
  - Assessment of need for Outpatient Physical Therapy
    - Script will be provided by MD at a follow up appointment
    - Level of therapy is individualized by patient need
Quality of Life

- **Pain Management**
  - You do not need to take narcotic pain medications if you are not having pain
    - Narcotic medications may affect your ability to think clearly, drive, & perform physical activities
    - Long-term opioid use may lead to addiction and our goal is to have that level reduced; non-narcotic pain medications may be offered (muscle relaxants, nerve medications, OTC analgesics (non-NSAIDS))
  - Ice packs are encouraged for pain management

- **Return to work/activity**
  - Approximately 8-12 weeks after surgery
    - Ex. Driving, work, household chores, sex
    - MD will provide return-to-work instructions
60-Day Follow-up Phone Call

- Your surgeon expects that you will participate in a 60-day follow-up phone call.
- A member HH Quality Team will contact you approximately two months following your surgery for a brief phone call.
- Topics covered include:
  - Recovery from surgery
  - Pain management & medication use
  - Ambulation
  - Return to work/driving
  - Complications & re-admissions
  - Staff feedback
Thank you for choosing the Bone & Joint Institute at Hartford Hospital and good luck with your surgical procedure!