



## **SI Fusion**

### **What to expect after surgery**

- You have had anesthesia today. Please do not eat anything greasy, spicy, or heavy as this can cause stomach upset. Eat soft, easily digestible foods such as soup, mashed potatoes or fruit.
- You should expect to have a fair amount of pain, specifically for the first week after surgery. Your muscles were cut and manipulated during the surgery. You should expect soreness. Hot showers and use of prescribed muscle relaxers and pain medications will help with this.
- You will receive prescriptions for pain medicine and muscle relaxers after your surgery. You will need to use them regularly at first. As you feel ready, decrease your dosage of pain medication. It is important that you do not take these medications in dosages higher than prescribed as this could cause difficulty breathing, over sedation and even death.
- While you are taking narcotics please increase the fiber in your diet or use stool softeners (up to 2 times per day) as these medications will cause constipation. Call office if no bowel movement after 3 days.
- It is common for swelling to occur near the incision site. This is due to body fluid collection and it will go away over time. You may use heating pads to assist your body to reabsorb the fluid faster.
- Your incision will be closed with glue. Do not pull the glue, it will come off on its own.
- It is normal to have some swelling and/or minimal drainage (clear/pink) from the incision in the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If drainage continues after 48 hours, call the office. Use dry gauze with paper tape to protect clothing from drainage, otherwise leave incision open to air.
- Discuss with your neurosurgical provider when you can return to work. If you need a work excuse or FMLA paperwork please contact the GNS main office.

### **Restrictions after surgery**

- Do not lift anything over 5-10 lbs for the first 3-4 weeks after surgery. After 3-4 weeks, you may slowly increase your lifting and mobility as tolerated based on pain response.
- You should limit your time in the car for the first week to short, local trips. Do not drive while you are still taking narcotic medication or anything that makes you drowsy.
- Walk to tolerance several times every day. This is critical as it decreases pain, increases blood flow to your surgical site and prevents blood clots and pneumonia. Frequent short walks are better than a single long walk. You will be sent home with rechargeable SCDs but these should not be used in place of walking.
- Keep incision clean and dry. Okay to shower the day after surgery with Hibiclens or a basic non-moisturizing soap if there is no drainage coming from the incision. Do not scrub your incision site. Do not immerse your incision in water (bathtub, swimming, etc.). Do not put ointment or cream on your incision.

### **When to call the office**

- Please call the office between 8:00 am – 4:00 pm for medication refills. Some medications may require authorization by the doctor. Due to this, try to call 2 days prior to running out of medication.
- Call for any temperature >101.5, increased incisional swelling or separation, increased drainage, redness, or increased pain. We may need to see you in the office.

**If you smoke, it is in your best interest to stop smoking completely. Cigarette smoking inhibits healing of nerve and bone tissues and increases the risk of complications such as wound infection. Eat a healthy diet, rich in proteins to help promote healing. Rest, relaxation and relieving stress are important components to good spine recovery.**