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POSTOP CARE AFTER - POSTERIOR CERVICAL FORAMINOTOMY SURGERY

WOUND

- There are typically dissolving sutures in the neck and no removal is required. Any paper tapes on the wound will fall off in the shower
- You can shower but keep the neck dry (i.e. not soaking) and do not swim for at least 3 months, or take a bath for 6 weeks after surgery
- Do not put any creams on the wound
- For the first week after surgery, after every shower, pat the wound

COLLAR

- A soft collar may be worn for comfort for the first 1-2 weeks but is not absolutely needed

EXERCISES

- The best exercise is walking. Small amounts frequently are best
- Follow the guidelines given to you by the physical therapist in hospital

POSTURE

- Avoid sitting for over an hour without taking a break
- Keep mobile- change positions frequently
- Do not lift more than 2kg (5 lb) for the first 6 weeks after surgery. Avoid bending.

DRIVING

- Try not to drive for at least 1-2 weeks after surgery.
- Do not drive if taking a lot of pain medication!

RETURN TO WORK

- It is best you take 2-4 weeks off from work after surgery.
- Light desk work can be commenced after this time. Make sure your computer monitor is at eye level (put a thick book under it to lift it up)
- Wait until seen at 6 weeks before planning anything more strenuous than this

PAIN RELIEF

- Tylenol (#1, 2 or 3), Percocet or Vicodin can be taken for wound pain after surgery
- Robaxin or Flexeril is used for muscle spasm
- The wound pain settles in 2-4 weeks.
- Numbness is very slow to recover and there may always be some residual numbness
- Pins and needles are not uncommon after surgery but should settle over time
- Do not take any anti-inflammatories (e.g. Voltaren, Mobic) or smoke for 2 weeks after surgery

FOLLOW-UP

- You need to see your neurosurgeon or his PA 2 weeks after surgery

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- If the wound becomes excessively red, swollen or painful or develops a discharge, or you have questions, contact your neurosurgeon in his office or see your GP.
- If it is an emergency and you cannot contact anyone come to the Emergency Room.