

# Posterior Spinal Fusion for Idiopathic Scoliosis Education Plan

## Getting Ready to Learn About Posterior Spinal Fusion for Idiopathic Scoliosis Recovery

Learning something new can be hard. It is even harder if you are not feeling well. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to review this information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who you want to learn with you. We would like to have someone who will be helping you at home learn with you.
- The best way for you to learn. Do you learn best by reading a book or pamphlet, or by doing things yourself?
- If you are not feeling well, if you are in pain or you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to your health. We may explain something more than once. We will be giving you information in small bits over several days. If there is something you don't understand, "It's OK to Ask" us to explain.

## What I Need to Learn About Posterior Spinal Fusion Recovery:

By the time I leave the hospital I will be able to show or tell the staff how I will:

1. Manage pain from my surgery.
2. Manage my activity after my surgery.
3. Care for the incision after my surgery.
4. Eat in order to heal from my surgery.
5. Know when to call the doctor's office.

## The staff will use three questions to teach me about Posterior Spinal Fusion Recovery:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat back important points in my own words, or ask me to show what I have learned. They want to make sure that I know about my medicine and how to take it safely and correctly.

### **What is my main problem?**

I have just had surgery to fuse or join the vertebra or bones of my spine.

Goals of spinal fusion could be to:

- Stop movement between the bones that causes pain or numbness.
- Stabilize an injury so that the spinal cord is not damaged
- Straighten my spine or keep it from getting worse.

### **What do I need to do?**

I will be able to tell the staff how I will manage my pain after surgery.

- Take the medicine my doctor ordered for me.
- Take the medicine before my pain is too bad. The medicine may not work as well if I wait too long to take it.
- Call my doctor if I think my medicine is not helping or if I feel I am reacting in a bad way to the medicines.
- Call my doctor or pharmacist if I have questions about the medicine.

I will be able to tell the staff how I will manage my activity after my surgery.

- I will make appointments for physical therapy after I am discharged.
- I will not exercise until my doctor or therapist tells me it is OK.
- When it is OK for me to exercise, I will do the exercises my doctor or therapist has ordered. The exercises will help me gain strength.
- I will avoid bending or twisting as directed by my doctor.
- I may have a limit on how much weight I can lift. I should not lift anything over the amount that the doctor or therapist says is safe for me.

- If my neck motion is limited from the surgery or from using a neck brace. I will not drive until the doctor gives the OK.
- I will talk to my doctor about what physical activities I like to do. My doctor will tell me what I can safely do.

#### Neck or Back Brace

- I may need to wear a brace for a time. The brace will limit my ability to move my neck or back. It will give me support and protect my spine.
- I will be able to tell the staff how I will use and care for my neck or back brace. I will have directions from the maker of the brace for caring for it.

I will be able to tell the staff how I will care for my incision after surgery.

- I will wash my hands before I touch my incision or bandage.
- I will keep my incision dry and covered to keep it from getting dirty.

#### I will **not**:

- Get my incision wet until cleared by my doctor.
- Put heat (heating pad, hot water bottle) on my incision until cleared by my doctor.
- Use ointments, lotions or creams on my incision until cleared by my doctor.
- Sleep with my pets or let them get near my incision.
- If my incision or bandage gets dirty, I will call my doctor.
- I will look for signs of infection.
  - Increased tenderness
  - Swelling
  - Drainage
  - Fever
  - Redness

I will be able to tell the staff what I will eat in order to heal from my surgery.

- Eat at least 2 servings of food rich in protein each day. Foods rich in protein include meats, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, beans, peas, and peanut butter.
- Eat 3 servings of dairy foods rich in protein. Dairy foods that are rich in protein include yogurt, cheese and milk.
- Eat 5 servings per day of fruits or vegetables. These foods are rich in vitamins that will help my incision heal.

To help keep my bowels working normally while I recover from surgery, I can:

- Eat whole grain breads and cereals. Eat brown or wild rice instead of white rice.
- Add beans, peas, or lentils to soups and casseroles.
- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take my medication for constipation as ordered by the doctor.

I will be able to tell the staff when I will call the physical therapist or doctor's office.

Call my doctor right away if I have:

- A fever.
- Pain I cannot control.
- Shortness of breath (can't get enough air), cough up blood or have chest congestion.
- Calf pain.
- Problems swallowing liquids, medicine or food after surgery.
- Increased drainage from the incision.
- Numbness, feel weak or fall.
- Bruising or more bleeding than I expect.

Call my doctor during office hours to:

- Ask questions about my surgery or how I am doing.
- Make appointments to check my progress. It is important that I keep these appointments.

Call the physical therapist to:

- Set a time for physical therapy.
- Ask questions about my exercises.

### **Why is this important to me?**

I need to follow these instructions to heal from my surgery. My risk of having problems will be less if I do the exercises, take my medicines, eat and rest.

As part of my care and to help me understand spinal fusion surgery, I have received the Spinal Fusion Education Plan. I may also receive:

- Spinal Precautions for Spinal Surgery
- Vendor written instructions on the care and application of a brace.
- Spine Education Guide

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## Resources

- ❑ [Spinal Fusion](#) – Nursing Reference Center Plus
- ❑ [Spinal Precautions for Spinal Surgery](#) – (Post-Surgical Precautions)

## Teaching Tools

- ❑ Physician Specific Surgical Instructions
- ❑ Posterior Spinal Fusion Recovery Education Plan
- ❑ [Lexicomp Spinal Fusion Patient Education](#)
- ❑ As part of the plan of care the patient may receive vendor written instructions on the care and application of a brace. (If the patient was given the brace in the operating room or in recovery, the vendors written instructions are likely in the patient’s belongings or in the chart.

## References

- ❑ Mosby's Nursing Consult [Computer software manual]. (n.d.). Retrieved April, 2014, from [Mosby Nursing Consult - Spinal Fusion](#).

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Always close each teaching session with the question, “What questions do you have for me?”

\*This page is intended for staff use only. Do not give to the patient. This document is not a part of the permanent medical record.