

# Commonly Asked Questions Before Surgery

*With a Brace*

## How Do I Schedule Surgery?

- Before your surgery is scheduled, Midwest Spine & Brain Institute will call your insurance provider for authorization.
- It can take up to 30 business days to hear back from your insurance provider. (Workers' compensation may take longer.)
- After approval is received, a surgery scheduler will call you. He or she will schedule a date and give you instructions.

## When Should I Schedule My Physical Exam?

- Schedule your physical exam with your primary care provider after a surgery scheduler calls you with the surgery date.
- You will need to have your exam between 10 and 30 days before your surgery.
- If a concern is found during your physical exam, it may delay your surgery.

## What Time is My Surgery?

- You will receive a call 1 to 2 days before surgery to tell you what time to arrive.

## Where Do I Send My Paperwork?

- Mail your fax your paperwork to Midwest Spine & Brain Institute at 1950 Northwestern Ave., Suite 102, Stillwater, MN 55082, or fax at 651-430-3827.

## What Restrictions Will I Have After Surgery?

- Your activity will be restricted (limited) after surgery.
- Your nurse or doctor will talk with you

**Call the Care Questions line on the attached business card if you need a note for work, a prescription refill, or if you have any questions or concerns.**

about your restrictions before you leave the hospital. It is important you follow these instructions for your recovery.

- Your doctor will talk with you about activity restrictions at your first follow-up visit.
- Do not drive when taking pain medicines or muscle relaxers.

## Will I Need Special Equipment or Services After Surgery?

- A social worker will meet with you to talk about where you will go after you leave the hospital. This will depend on how you progress after surgery and what your doctor recommends. Check with your insurance provider so you know what is covered **if** you need to go to a transitional care facility.
- Talk with a social worker if you feel you need home care or medical equipment (such as a hospital bed).

## Can I Get Pain Medicine Before Surgery?

- Pain medicine is prescribed in the hospital.
- You can expect an increase in pain right after surgery. You and your health care team will work on your pain plan together.

## What if I Need Dental Work Before Surgery?

- Have any dental work done at least 6 weeks before a non-urgent (elective) surgery. **(over)**

# Commonly Asked Questions After Surgery

## How Do I Get Medicine Refills?

- Call the Care Questions line 2 to 3 business days ahead of time to request a refill on a medicine you were given after surgery.
- Your care team does not accept refill requests from the pharmacy.
- Your care team does not typically prescribe pain medications for longer than 90 days after surgery.
- Do not get prescription pain medicine from any other doctor during this time.

## Why Am I Having Pain, Numbness or Tingling After Surgery?

- The symptoms you had before surgery may take weeks or months to improve.
- Be patient and allow your body time to heal.
- It is often normal to have some new pain, tingling or numbness in your arms or legs after surgery.

## How Do I Care for My Incision?

- Check your incision every day for redness, swelling or drainage. Your incision should look better each day.
- Keep your incision dry and covered.
- Change your dressing every day or more often if it becomes saturated.
- Do not shower for 48 hours after surgery.
- Remove the dressing before taking a shower. After showering, pat the incision dry and cover with a new, dry dressing if you still have drainage.
- Do not apply ointments, creams, lotions or oils to your incision until completely healed.
- Stitches, staples or both will be removed at your follow-up visit.
- Do not take tub baths for 6 weeks after surgery or until your incision is completely healed.

## When Should I Call My Care Team?

Call the Care Questions line on the attached business card if you have:

- a temperature of 101 F or higher
- yellow or green drainage or more than a slight amount of bloody drainage from your incision
- redness, swelling, or warmth around your incision
- new or unusual pain, numbness or tingling
- pain you cannot control
- bowel or bladder changes
- an opening in your incision
- pain in your calf or pressure in your legs
- any other questions or concerns.

## How Long do I Have to Wear a Brace?

- Wear your brace at all times (except when you shower) unless your doctor gives you other directions.
- Wear your brace until your doctor tells you to start using it less. This is usually 3 to 6 months after surgery.

## Do I Need Physical Therapy?

- Walking is the best exercise.
  - Start by walking short distances several times each day. Slowly increase the distance you walk as you are able.
  - Listen to your body. If you feel sore or pain, cut back the amount of walking until you are more comfortable.
- Talk with your doctor about the need for physical therapy at your follow-up visit.

## Will I Need Antibiotics Before a Dental Procedure?

- You do not need antibiotics if you had spinal surgery.