

Missouri Spine Institute, LLC

Spine Surgery Handbook

You and Dr. Spears have agreed that a surgical procedure is the best option for treatment of your spine condition/problem. Preparation for your surgery and your participation during recovery is very important. This handbook will provide you with the information you will need before and after your surgery.



Your surgery is scheduled at **Capital Region Medical Center** on

_____, _____ at _____ am/pm

Please be sure to arrive at the hospital (2) hours prior to your scheduled surgery time.

(Surgery times may vary depending on changes that need to be made to the surgery schedule. You will receive a phone call the day before your surgery to confirm the surgery time and arrival time.)

When you arrive at the hospital, please go to the patient registration desk at the main outpatient entrance. You will be instructed where to proceed from there.

Contact Information:



1125 Madison Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101
(573) 632-5000



Preparing for your surgery:

Medications: You will need to discontinue and avoid certain blood thinning medications for a designated period prior to the surgery. These medications include any Aspirin containing medications and N'SAIDS. (i.e. Aleve and Advil) These medications thin the blood and increase the risk of blood loss during surgery. According to the medication list provided you need to stop the following medications (2) weeks prior to surgery unless otherwise instructed:

(Please contact your surgeon's office if you have questions regarding what medications you should stop prior to surgery.)

*****Please remember, you will be unable to resume any N'SAIDs or other anti-inflammatory medications for approximately (3) months following this procedure. This includes, but is not limited to, Aleve, Ibuprofen, Motrin, etc. If you have any questions in regards to what medications you should or should not be taking following surgery, please do not hesitate to contact our office.*****

Pre-Operative Appointment: Prior to surgery you will be scheduled to have some pre-operative testing. This is typically done the week before surgery. Our office will schedule a date and time that works with your schedule. This pre-operative appointment will be scheduled at Capital Region Medical Center unless other arrangements are made.

Your physician will decide what tests you will need. These tests *may* include:

- ✓ Blood work
- ✓ An EKG
- ✓ A CXR
- ✓ Urine Nicotine Test (if required)
- ✓ You will also meet with the anesthesiologist to discuss their role in the surgery. The pre-operative nurse(s) at the hospital will also go over your medical history and medications and will have you sign the surgery informed consent forms.

Instructions for Pre-operative appointment:

- ✓ Bring an updated, complete list of medications.
- ✓ You DO NOT need to fast for these tests
- ✓ Bring an updated insurance card

**Your pre-operative appointment is scheduled at Capital Region
Medical Center on:**

_____ , _____ at _____ am/pm

Cardiac Clearance: If you have a cardiologist, our office will contact their office to determine what steps need to be taken to obtain cardiac clearance. You may also want to inform your PCP of your upcoming procedure.

Smoking Cessation/Urine Nicotine Test: Patients scheduled to undergo a *spinal fusion* surgery will be required to do a urine nicotine test prior to their surgery. Although smoking cessation is recommended for all of our patients, smoking cessation is only required for our spinal fusion patients. (It is imperative that you **STOP SMOKING AND USING ANY NICOTINE PRODUCTS** prior to your surgery, including nicotine patches, nicotine gum, etc.)

Notification of Illness/Other Procedures: If you develop any kind of illness such as a cold, flu, skin rash/infection, or other potential complication prior to surgery you should notify your surgeon's office immediately. You should also notify the surgeon's office of any upcoming dental appointments or other scheduled procedures to see if they will interfere with the scheduled spine surgery.

Transportation: Arrangements should be made for you to have a driver to and from the hospital the day of/after the surgery.

Paperwork: Many employers require FMLA paperwork to be completed for an extended absence. You may also have disability policies that require forms to be completed. FMLA, AFLAC, and/or other disability forms should be sent to Dr. Spears' office for completion. You may fax, mail, e-mail, or drop off this paperwork to Dr. Spears' office. Please indicate where you would like these forms sent after they are completed and please allow at least 3-5 working days for completion. There may be a charge for completion of these forms.

Brace: You may have been fitted for and provided a brace to wear following your spine surgery. **It is very important that you bring this brace with you to the hospital the morning of surgery.** You will not be able to get up out of bed following surgery without wearing this brace.



Night Before/Day of Surgery:

- ✓ You may shower the night before and/or the morning of surgery.
- ✓ No perfumes, powders, lotions, body oils, or make-up on the day of surgery.
- ✓ **DO NOT eat or drink anything after midnight the evening before surgery unless otherwise indicated. This includes coffee, gum, etc.**
- ✓ You may take any heart or blood pressure medications the morning of surgery with a *very small* sip of water. All other medications will be given, as needed, after the surgery. If you have concerns about which medications you should or should not take, please contact Dr. Spears' office and they will be able to give instructions. The nurse(s) at the hospital will also go over this with you during the pre-operative appointment.
- ✓ It is recommended to wear loose-fitting clothing that are easy to take on and off the day of surgery and the day home from surgery. A button-up shirt is suggested. Shoes that easily slip on and off are also recommended. If you will be staying overnight, make sure to pack any personal items that you may need. (Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, health insurance card, co-payment, etc.) Please leave valuable items such as jewelry, money, etc. at home.
- ✓ Please leave your medications at home and make sure to bring an updated list of all your medications, including doses and times you take them, so that your medications can be administered as needed during your stay at the hospital following your surgery.



Golden Rules/Instructions Following: **Non-Fusion Lumbar Spine Surgery**

(Anterior Cervical Discectomy & Fusion)

- 1) **No lifting greater than 10 pounds until instructed.** For example, a gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds. Many of your typical activities of daily living involve weights of similar size. Please consult your physician and/or occupational therapist for ways to modify these activities.
- 2) **Be ultra-aware of your posture.** Your head will have the tendency to move forward on your shoulders. You need to resist this tendency. Keep your head directly over your shoulders with your chin tucked in. This helps keep your neck heal in the proper position.
- 3) **Practice the basic stabilization exercises daily.** You now need to re-teach the muscles of the neck to work with the new mechanics of the fusion. Learning to hold good neutral head positions is vital.
- 4) **Always use appropriate body mechanics.** Support your low back with a firm cushion to maintain an appropriate arch in the back. This will help keep your head over your shoulders. When sitting in a high back chair, push head against seat cushion to gain extra support and promote good head alignment.
- 5) **Wear your collar at all time if the physician prescribes one to you.** Good compliance with the use of the collar will help protect your neck from injury and inspire optimal healing. You will be instructed if the collar may be removed when bathing or when supervised by a physical therapist.
- 6) **Practice swallowing several times a day.** In order to regain flexibility and quality of movement, it is good to practice swallowing several times in a row. This will retrain your muscles to swallow naturally and avoid any difficulty.
- 7) **Deep breathing exercises are important.** Deep breathing exercises are beneficial to the body as a whole. Deep breathing expands the ribcage and mobilizes the vertebrae in the back reducing tension in the neck.
- 8) **No driving allowed until the first follow up visit or until you have been instructed to do so by your physician.** Driving is not allowed while you are wearing the cervical collar.

9) Permission to return to work must be given by your physician.

This depends on your job description, actual job duties, your ability to go on “light-duty” or modify your activity, and finally, on your ability to abide by the above restrictions while at work.

10) Use an icepack regularly. Ice should be used regularly at the base of the head and neck to reduce headaches. Ice can also effectively reduce swelling around the neck and allow for comfortable activities.

11) Exercise is very important following a cervical surgery. For the first few weeks after surgery, walk as much as tolerated and only perform the exercises instructed by the physical therapist. The walking program will deliver more blood to the healing area and load the bone to promote optimal healing. By increasing your walking tolerance and adhering to the specified home exercise program, you will transition quickly and effectively into the outpatient rehabilitation program.

12) Take your medications as prescribed. You will receive prescriptions for a pain medication, anti-inflammatory, and a muscle relaxant. Pain medications must be taken at the intervals prescribed to relieve pain or prevent you from experiencing pain post operatively. You may also use plain Tylenol for pain. Use the muscle relaxers as needed, especially for the first few days. You may need the medications for the first week or two after the surgery. **Anti-inflammatory medications are NOT used as they interfere with the bone fusion.**

13) No water immersion of the neck until the wound is healed. You may shower or sit in the bath as instructed by the doctor. You may wash your hair. Do **NOT** scrub the incision. Allow the soapy water to run over the area and pat dry.



When to call your doctor:

- If you have fever, chills, or a measured temperature of 101.5 or greater.
- If you have drainage from your incision after a week.
- If you have are having intolerable side effects to the medications, stop taking the medication and call your doctor.
- If you experience unusual difficulty swallowing.
- Any problem, concern, or questions you can call the office at (573) 635-0401.
- If you call the office after-hours follow the prompts and you will be asked to leave a message for one of the medical office staff to return your call. One of the medical staff personnel will return your call as soon as possible.
- PRESCRIPTION REFILLS will not be addressed using the after-hours “on call” number. THIS NUMBER IS FOR POST OPERATIVE PATIENTS WITH CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR SURGERY/INCISION/ETC.** Prescription refill requests will be accepted during office hours or by regular telephone message **ONLY** and will require 48 hours to be filled.

Financial Arrangements:

General Information:

While it is ultimately the patient's responsibility to understand their insurance benefits and make payments accordingly, Dr. Spears' staff, along with the billing department at Capital Region Medical Center, is available to help answer questions and work out payment arrangements prior to your scheduled surgery date.

Please understand that while Dr. Spears and Capital Region Medical Center are affiliated they are *not* the same entity and you will be required to make separate payment arrangements to all facilities that provided a service during your stay. If you have had anesthesia, lab work, or X-rays in addition to your surgery and/or hospital stay, you will receive separate bills from one or all of the following:

- Capital Region Medical Center
- Your attending physician(s) (Dr. Spears)
- Capital Region Medical Center Radiologist
- Capital City Anesthesia & Perioperative Providers, LLC
- Boyce and Bynum Pathology Lab

Charges you receive from any of the above groups represent their fees for service to you at Capital Region Medical Center. Charges received from Capital Region Medical Center represent the use of their equipment, personnel and material necessary to care for you.

Responsibilities/Services provided by Dr. Spears' Office:

- Upon request, Dr. Spears' office is able to provide you with a rough estimate of what *their* charges will be for the surgery and, depending on your insurance benefits, what your out of pocket cost will be.
THIS ESTIMATE WILL BE FOR DR. SPEARS SERVICES ONLY.
- Dr. Spears' staff will be responsible for obtaining pre-authorization/pre-certification for services from your insurance provider. Obtaining these authorizations can be very involved and time consuming. Immense effort will be put forth to obtain authorization for services prior to the date of surgery. However, in the event that your insurance company does not render an approval for services by the surgery date, services *will not* be provided without prior authorization being obtained **or** without the patient signing a "non-coverage" waiver.

- ❑ If prior authorization has NOT been obtained the day prior to your scheduled surgery, you will receive a phone call from Dr. Spears' staff letting you know the status of the authorization. At that time, you may decide to post-pone your surgery until your insurance company renders an approval for services.

- ❑ If you decide *not* to post-pone your surgery, you will be required to sign a waiver of non-coverage by Capital Region Medical Center. You will also be required to make a down-payment for services. This down-payment is determined by your medical benefits and estimated charges by the facility. If the decision is made to proceed with surgery and sign the non-coverage waiver, you will need to call the billing office at Capital Region Medical Center at (573) 632-5029 to make payment arrangements PRIOR TO THE SURGERY DATE.



For your convenience, below is the Payment Arrangements & Financial Services Information available on Capital Region Medical Center's website.

We serve everyone who comes to us in need of care. Here's a summary of our financial assistance policies:

What if I do not have health insurance?

You get a discount on your bill of 45% if paid within 30 days.

What if I can not afford to pay what I owe the hospital?

You have options:

-Medicaid and other public programs

For *inpatient* services we have a patient advocate on site that can assist you in applying for these programs.

For *outpatient* services we can give you information on who is eligible and how to apply. Just stop by our Patient Advocate office located by the cashier or call and make an appointment at (573) 632-5131.

-Financial Assistance Program

If you are not eligible for Medicaid, you may qualify for our financial assistance program. Your household income and the amount of your medical bills are taken into consideration in determining if you qualify. Our assistance is based on 200% of the Federal Poverty level with a sliding scale up to 400%.

-Payment Arrangements or interest free loans

We have many options available to assist you in resolving your account(s). Just contact our office at (573) 632-5029 to discuss your needs.

What do I need to get financial assistance?

You must complete a financial assistance application. You will have to supply information about your household income and expenses.

Can the hospital help me apply?

Yes

When will I know if I have been approved for financial assistance?

You will know within 14 days of receipt of your **completed** application. You will be sent bills during this time. We cannot approve an incomplete application.

Do I have to fill out an application for each of my accounts?

No. One application will cover all your active outstanding accounts.

How long do I have to pay my outstanding medical bills?

We will look at each case individually. However, a monthly plan is possible. Contact us for more information.

Who do I contact for more information?

Patient Accounts Office Mon.-Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (573) 632-5029.