

Depending on the surgery to be performed, there will be specific instructions relayed to you about your individual steps. However, the following is general information provided to guide your experience through the various stages.

SCHEDULING YOUR SURGERY

Once your neurosurgeon recommends surgery and you both agree to proceed, our staff will then begin the process to schedule your surgery. Please note scheduling your surgery may take up to 2 weeks depending on the providers schedule, and if your insurance requires prior authorization or pre-certification. In addition, if your provider requires you to have surgical clearance from your PCP (Primary Care Provider), our office must receive the written clearance before proceeding with scheduling.

After surgery orders have been written and clearance has been received, the TBSI Neurosurgery office staff will contact you to establish a surgery date. Once this has been established, our office staff will contact the hospital to schedule your surgery and pre-operative appointment.

The hospital scheduling staff will then begin to work on obtaining and verifying prior authorization or pre-certification from your insurance company as well. Upon receipt of all of the necessary insurance verifications, the hospital will then contact you over the phone prior to your pre-operative visit and your surgery to confirm dates and other pertinent information to include any financial arrangements or instructions that you will need for your scheduled pre-operative appointment and/or surgery. Please note, if for any reason, the insurance company denies your surgery, the surgery will be postponed until the authorization can be obtained.

MEDICATIONS

If you are currently taking any type of blood thinners (examples are Plavix, Aspirin, Coumadin), you will be required to stop taking them prior to your surgery, unless otherwise instructed.

Plavix- You will need to stop your Plavix 2 weeks prior to the date of your surgery

Aspirin- You will need to stop your Aspirin 1-2 weeks prior to the date of your surgery

THE DAY/NIGHT BEFORE YOUR SURGERY

You will receive most of your instructions for your specific procedure at the scheduled pre-operative visit at the hospital. This visit should occur in the 2-week window prior to your surgery. To avoid any unnecessary surprises, please try to have completed this prior to the day of your surgery.

Please have arrangements made for someone to drive you home when you are discharged from the hospital.

Unless otherwise instructed, DO NOT EAT OR DRINK AFTER MIDNIGHT THE NIGHT BEFORE. You may ask the hospital nurse at your pre-operative visit regarding the need for certain medications

immediately prior to your surgery, but this will depend on the medication, your individual procedure and health status.

THE DAY OF YOUR SURGERY

Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. Do not bring any valuables with you to the hospital. If you are staying overnight, please bring your overnight bag with you (recommend leaving the overnight bag in the car until needed).

On the day of surgery, you will be admitted to the hospital. A nurse in the preoperative area will begin an I.V. and administer preoperative antibiotics. An anesthesia provider will visit you and perform a brief history and physical examination. You will be offered medication to relax you prior to surgery. Other testing may be performed at the request of anesthesia at this time.

Once ready for surgery, you will be taken to the surgical suite. Your family is instructed where to wait for the surgeon after the surgery. Once in the operating suite, you will notice a great deal of activity in the room to prepare for the operation. This is all very normal. Many forms of monitoring devices will be placed in preparation for surgery. You will be given medication to put you to sleep.

FOLLOWING YOUR SURGERY

After surgery, you will spend approximately one to two hours in the recovery room. Postoperative pain will be controlled by medication. If a catheter has been placed in the operating room to drain urine, it may be removed at this time. Upon leaving the recovery room, you will be taken to your room where medication to control pain will be available. You will begin getting out of bed shortly after your surgery. If you are having outpatient surgery, you will be discharged in the afternoon, once you are walking, eating and comfortable.

Fluids and food will begin once you are awake enough to take in these items. Once you can take fluids by mouth without difficulty, the intravenous fluid will be stopped. If you had dietary restrictions at home, the hospital staff and your provider will need to be made aware so they may order the proper diet. A dietician is available for special dietary needs.

You will be encouraged to cough and deep breathe every two hours while awake. A machine called an incentive Spirometer will be explained and left at the bedside. You are encouraged to use the incentive Spirometer every two hours while awake.

Once key to prevention of postoperative complications is early walking. Postoperatively, you can begin getting out of bed before formal physical therapy has actually begun. Physical therapy will assist you with mobilization. The physical therapist will assess your need for assist devices for safe ambulation at home. These items will be arranged for home use prior to discharge if needed. The physical therapist will also give you exercise instructions and will provide you with written material on the exercises to be done performed on a daily basis once you are discharged from the hospital.

You may shower postoperatively. No tub baths are allowed until the skin incision heals. There is no special care required for the incision.

DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPINE SURGERY

Prior to being discharged from the hospital, the hospital nurse will provide you with any post-operative instructions and/or restrictions pertaining to your surgery and recovery. These instructions are specific to you and your procedure, so please be sure to ask any questions you may have during this process.

Inpatient rehabilitation is not needed for most patients following spine surgery. Occasionally, a patient will need extended, inpatient rehabilitation. Many patients can follow the postoperative instructions for exercise and restrictions without the need of formal rehabilitation. The need for formal inpatient rehabilitation is evaluated on a patient-by-patient basis.

Caring for Your Incision

- You can remove the large bulky bandage/dressing 36-48 hours after your surgery.
 - You can take a shower the day after your surgery, however, do NOT actively wash or immerse your incision.
 - Keep the incision clean and dry and a Band-Aid over the incision. If the incision gets wet, blot it dry.
 - Contact your provider if you notice any excessive swelling, redness, widening of, or drainage from the incision or a fever of 101 or greater.
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- Restricted Activities
 - You should not lift, push, or pull anything heavier than 10 lbs. or lift anything above your shoulders until your first post-operative clinic visit
 - Let pain be your guide- if it hurts, don't do it. Otherwise, you may walk, take the stairs, ride in a car, or fly in a plane as long as it feels comfortable to do so.
 - You may start driving when you feel you are safe to do so.
 - DO NOT DRIVE WHILE TAKING NARCOTIC MEDICATIONS.
 - Unless your job requires exceeding the guidelines provided above, you may return to work as soon as you would like.
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- Medication
 - You will experience minor pain after your surgery. Tenderness around the scar usually lasts for 8-12 weeks after surgery. To help take the edge off the pain, you may be provided with a prescription for pain medication.
 - Some of the pain medications can lead to constipation – an over-the-counter stool softener is recommended.

- If you normally take blood thinning medications such as Aspirin, Plavix, or Coumadin, you may resume their use in 5 days, unless otherwise instructed.

SCHEDULING YOUR FIRST FOLLOW- UP APPOINTMENT

Your first follow-up appointment with your surgeon will be approximately two weeks from the date of your surgery. This will be coordinated during the surgery scheduling process with the office staff at TBSI Neurosurgery. The TBSI Neurosurgery office staff will also inform you of any imaging that may be needed for your follow-up appointment. We will take care of faxing over the orders to the appropriate place and obtaining authorization from your insurance company, if needed. Your provider will discuss your recovery and customized treatment plan with you at your follow up appointment.

On the first postoperative visit, the incision may be in different stages of healing. If there are stitches or staples, they will be removed at this time. Should the incision have "steri-strips", they will peel off when ready or will be removed by the provider during the first postoperative visit. No special diets are needed postoperatively. We encourage all patients to eat healthy food and drink lots of fluids. Drinking eight glasses of water a day may decrease constipation in the first weeks after your surgery. This is not the time to begin a diet as you need protein to heal and carbohydrates for energy.

QUESTIONS / CONCERNS?

Should you have any questions or concerns during this time, please call the office at 979-776-8896 to leave a message for your provider. The office staff will relay the message to your provider promptly. However, please note that while our providers are extremely concerned about your questions, their time is split between the operating room, outreach clinics and clinic obligations; thereby they may not be in the office every day. It is our goal to try and return calls within a 24-hour period. If you have an emergency, please indicate as much to the office staff so we can expedite as necessary.

As always, in a true emergency situation, we recommend that you call 911 or go to the Emergency Room at your nearest hospital.

This material is intended to give the patient an overview of surgical procedures and treatments and is not intended to replace the advice and guidance of a physician. Always consult with your doctor about the particular risks and benefits of your treatment.