



## Lumbar Laminectomy

## Hospital Stay

After your Lumbar Laminectomy procedure, there are a number of things to be aware of during and after the recovery process. As with any surgical procedure there are certain risks involved, although the majority of patients will not experience them.

### TIME IN HOSPITAL

- two nights usually; longer if necessary (prolonged fever, drainage, bowel or bladder difficulty, etc)

### PAIN

- expect significant pain for the first 24 hours
- usually controlled by intravenous or intramuscular narcotics
- home on oral medication

### FEVER

- common and usually temporary due to changes in the respiratory system

### URINARY RETENTION

- commonly catheterization of the bladder is necessary

### WOUND DRAINAGE

- not uncommon, and treated with dressing changes or reinforcement

### ANEMIA

- uncommon and usually treated with iron pills; rarely by transfusions
- discuss any concerns about transfusions with your surgeon before surgery

### ABDOMINAL DISTENTION

- uncommon and due to temporary shutdown of bowels
- usually treated with laxatives and time; occasionally by nasogastric tube

### SORE THROAT

- temporary discomfort from tube placement in the windpipe during surgery for anesthesia

### INTRAVENOUS SITE

- swelling and bruising can occur which commonly resolves in time

### DRAIN

- a drain may be placed in the surgery site; usually removed in 2-3 days

### PHYSICAL THERAPY

- will assist in ambulation twice a day

### DISCHARGE PLANNING

- liaison personnel available for arranging home equipment, therapy, nursing visits, etc
- depends on insurance coverage



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## Post-Operative Instructions

These are guidelines and are not inflexible

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### ACTIVITY

- limited to walking as comfortable; sitting 5-15 minutes, rest as necessary
- change positions frequently
- stay at home until approved by M.D.
- no driving; no bending, lifting, pushing or pulling

### CALLS

- call office to see M.D. within one or two weeks of discharge
- sutures (staples) usually removed on first office visit
- call M.D. for the following problems or any other concern:
  - fever, redness or swelling
  - drainage from the incision
  - excessive pain or spasm

### DIET

- normal

### DRESSING

- keep dry and clean; no baths or jacuzzi until approved by M.D.
- showers OK if dressing is kept dry

### EXPECT

- stiffness and discomfort for approximately two - four weeks after surgery

### OFF

- work for approximately six - eight weeks by average

### PHYSICAL THERAPY

- to start approximately two - four weeks after surgery

### REFILL

- prescriptions Monday - Friday 8:30am - 5:00pm

CALL M.D. FOR ANY CONCERNS

REMEMBER, KEEP THE DRESSING DRY AND CLEAN

## Lumbar Laminectomy

## Complications/ Risks

Not complete or inclusive

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### WITHIN DAYS OR WEEKS

#### General anesthetic / medication adverse reactions

(eg, heart, lung, mental problems, etc)

Blood transfusion reactions

#### Infections

- treatment depends on seriousness of infection
  - possible oral antibiotics
  - possible intravenous antibiotics for weeks
    - possible insertion of special catheter for I.V. antibiotics treatment
  - possible re-operations for debridement and closure of wound
  - potential extended time in hospital or potential re-operations

#### Post-operative hemorrhage

- re-operations with extended recovery time

#### Spinal fluid leakage

- membranes covering the nerves are often thinned by herniated discs or stenosis and can open
- treatment includes extended bed rest with head of bed flat
- or spinal fluid drainage catheter in low back
- or re-operations

#### Nerve problems (spinal cord or nerve root)

- temporary (weeks/ months) or rarely permanent
- new or worse pain
- numbness, weakness, or very rarely paralysis
- bowel or bladder difficulty

### WITHIN MONTHS OR YEARS (DELAYED)

Excessive scar tissue with recurrent pain

disc herniation

Spinal instability

### ALL OF THE ABOVE POSSIBLY LEAD TO NEW SYMPTOMS

These could lead to re-operations and fusions

These occasionally lead to new permanent nerve and other problems



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## Rare but Potentially Serious Risks

Not complete or inclusive

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### CARDIAC (heart)

- myocardial infraction (heart attack)
- arrythmias (irregular heart beat)

### PULMONARY (lung)

- pneumonia
- pulmonary embolus (blood clot to lung)

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (blood clot in leg)

### GASTROINTESTINAL (stomach/ intestines)

- hemorrhage
- ulcers

### BLOOD PROBLEMS

- severe anemia
- aplastic anemia (shut down of ability to make blood cells)

### NEUROLOGICAL PROBLEMS

- 'stroke'

### INFECTIONS

- deep and serious; poorly responsive to treatment
- potential spread to blood and organs

ANY OF THE ABOVE COULD INVOLVE ADDITIONAL TREATMENTS

ANY OF THE ABOVE COULD LEAD TO EXTENDED TIME IN THE HOSPITAL

ANY OF THE ABOVE HAVE POTENTIAL FOR PERMANENT DISABILITY

ANY OF THE ABOVE HAVE POTENTIAL FOR LOSS OF LIFE