

Cervical Laminoplasty

Patient post-operative instructions

Typical hospital course

Usually 1 to 2 nights in the hospital. Some patients stay longer depending on pain control, walking, drain output, and overall recovery.

Key limits / reminders

Soft collar for comfort only in most cases. Walking is encouraged. No heavy lifting or impact activity for the first 6 weeks.

Before surgery

- A short haircut or close trim on the back of the neck can make dressing care easier after surgery.
- Bring a loose-fitting shirt that does not rub the back of the neck.

After surgery

- Neck and shoulder soreness is common early after surgery.
- A drain is often left overnight and removed before discharge.
- Depending on closure type, sutures or staples may need to be removed at follow-up.

Incision and showering

- Keep the incision and dressing dry until your surgeon says it is okay to let water run over it.
- Do not soak in a tub, pool, or hot tub until cleared.
- Call if the dressing becomes saturated or if there is increasing drainage.

Brace and activity

- A soft collar is commonly used for comfort only and may be removed to work gently on neck motion as tolerated if your surgeon has allowed that.
- Walking is encouraged right away. Avoid heavy lifting, forceful neck movements, and impact activity for 6 weeks.

Medications, driving, and work

- Pain medicine is tapered over 1 to 3 weeks in most patients.
- Tylenol is acceptable, and NSAIDs are often allowed after laminoplasty if you do not have another medical reason to avoid them.
- Do not drive while taking opioid pain medication or muscle relaxers.

Follow-up

- Typical follow-up is around 2 weeks, 8 weeks, 3 months, and sometimes 6 months depending on x-rays and symptoms.

Constipation

- Opioid pain medication commonly causes constipation. Start a stool softener and/or gentle laxative if needed, drink fluids, and stop these medicines if you develop loose stools or diarrhea.
- If you go several days without a bowel movement despite over-the-counter treatment, call the office.

Smoking / nicotine

- Avoid smoking and nicotine while you are healing. It can increase the risk of wound problems and slow recovery.

Call right away for

- Increasing pain that is not controlled with the prescribed medication plan.
- New or worsening weakness, numbness, tingling, loss of balance, or new trouble using your arms or legs.
- Redness, swelling, warmth, drainage, or a bad smell from the incision.
- Fever of 101 F or higher.
- Inability to urinate, loss of bowel or bladder control, or new saddle numbness.
- New calf pain or swelling, chest pain, coughing up blood, or shortness of breath.

Questions or concerns: call the office. For chest pain, severe shortness of breath, or another emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.