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DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERVICAL DISCECTOMY AND ARTHROPLASTY

1. **FOLLOW UP:** I want you to call the office to get an appointment in approximately one month. In three months from now, you will have an appointment wherein we will get an x-ray.
2. **WOUND CARE:** You have a small piece of gauze with a clear plastic dressing. That is a water-proof dressing and you can take a shower with it. If it appears that the dressing got wet then remove the dressing and dry the wound. You will not need any further dressings at that point. If the dressing stays dry, just leave it on for two days and then you can remove it at that point. At that point you can take a shower and get it wet. However, make sure it is dry by blotting and blow dryer to make sure it is nice and dry. Keep your fingers and hands off the wound. Any advancing red zone or pus or other concerns warrant a telephone call to the office.
3. **MEDICATIONS:** You will go home on your usual medications that you were taking prior to surgery with four additions:
 - Ice. Although this is not a medication I want you to use it frequently on your neck. You will like it for about a week.
 - Antiinflammatory medication.
 - Muscle relaxant. This will be taken daily until I see you in one month. This is for achy pain in the neck and can taken on an as needed basis. If you do not like it, do not take it.
 - Narcotic. This can be taken as needed for pain. The goal is not to be completely pain-free and there has to be a balance between pain management and over-sedation from the narcotics. Most people are off narcotics after approximately one week. You cannot drive and you cannot work on the narcotics in that it is illegal to drive after taking narcotics. After about one day after taking narcotics it is probably legal to drive at that point. There are side effects with the narcotics which include drowsiness, sleepiness, itchiness, and difficulty with sexual activity. You should not use sharp instruments while on narcotics either.
4. **ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS:** Restrictions after this operation are highly individual. I will instruct you at the time of your discharge specific restrictions. However, generally patients after a cervical arthroplasty are allowed to return to full activity as soon as they are off narcotics. There will be some cervical pain but it is not dangerous to do so. When you are in a vehicle always make sure you have a shoulder belt and a head rest that hits the middle of the back of your head. You want to avoid ladders, roofs, slippery surfaces, bicycles, and motorcycles, ATV's, skateboards, etc. or any activity where you can fall and hit your head primarily because it will obviously cause neck pain. It is very unlikely that these activities will cause breakage of the arthroplasty however. The lifting restrictions will be based completely on the function of your arms and the strength in your arms after surgery and not based upon the fact that you have had an arthroplasty. We will discuss your lifting restrictions at the time of your discharge.