



Care Questions: (651) 259-4562  
Surgery Scheduling: (651) 259-4554  
Appointments: (651) 430-3800

# Frequently Asked Questions before Surgery

Care Team: Dr. Buttermann

## How do I schedule surgery?

- Before we can schedule your surgery, we will need to contact your insurance company for authorization.
- It can take up to 30 business days to hear back from your insurance company. Workers Compensation may take longer.
- After insurance approves your surgery, a surgery scheduler will contact you to schedule a date and give you instructions.

## When should I schedule my physical exam?

- After a surgery scheduler contacts you and confirms a date for your surgery, you will need to schedule your physical exam.
- Your physical exam should be scheduled with your Primary Care Provider. This exam must occur between 10 and 30 days before your surgery.
- If a concern is found during your physical exam, it may delay your surgery.

## What time is my surgery scheduled for?

- The hospital or surgery center will call you 1-2 days before surgery to tell you what time to arrive.

## Where do I send paperwork that needs to be completed?

- Mail or fax your paperwork to Midwest Spine & Brain Institute.

1950 Northwestern Avenue, Suite 102  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
Fax: (651) 430-3827

## What restrictions will I have after surgery?

- Your activity will be restricted following surgery.
- Restrictions are listed in your surgical packet and will also be discussed with you before you leave the

hospital. It is very important that you follow the restrictions you are given.

- Activity and ongoing restrictions will be discussed with you at your first appointment after surgery.
- Do not drive until your doctor approves you to drive.
- Do not drive when taking pain medications or muscle relaxants.
- If you need a work note for your employer please call your care team at 651-259-4562.

## Will I need special equipment or services after surgery?

- During your hospital stay, Social Services will meet with you to talk about where you will go after you leave the hospital. This will depend on how you progress after surgery and what your doctor recommends. Check with your insurance company to understand your coverage in the event a transitional care facility is recommended.
- If you feel you will need home care services or medical equipment (such as a hospital bed), please talk to Social Services about this in the hospital.

## Can I get pain medication before surgery?

- We rarely prescribe pain medication before surgery.
- Pain medication will be prescribed in the hospital.
- We typically do not prescribe pain medications for longer than 90 days after surgery.
- If your pain continues after this time, you may be referred to a doctor who specializes in the medical management of pain.
- You should not obtain pain medications from any other doctor during the time we are prescribing.

Please refer to your surgery packet for additional information. If you have further questions after reviewing your surgery packet, please call your care team at 651-259-4562.



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# Frequently Asked Questions after Surgery

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## Who do I contact if I need refills of my medications?

- Please call your care team 2-3 business days ahead of time to request a refill on a medication you were given after surgery. Your care team can be reached at 651-259-4562.
- We do not accept refill requests from the pharmacy.
- If you feel that your pain is not controlled, please call your care team at 651-259-4562. Do not take more pain medication than prescribed.
- We typically do not prescribe pain medications for longer than 90 days after surgery.
- If your pain continues after this time, you may be referred to a doctor who specializes in the medical management of pain.
- You should not obtain pain medications from any other doctor during the time we are prescribing.

## Why am I having shooting or different pain, numbness or tingling after surgery?

- The symptoms you had before surgery may take weeks or months to improve.
- Be patient and allow your body time to heal.
- It is often normal to have some new pain, tingling and/or numbness in your arms or legs after surgery.
- If you have questions or concerns about a new pain, please call your care team at 651-259-4562 so we can help you determine if it is expected or not.

## How do I care for my incision?

- Check your incision every day for redness, swelling or drainage. Your incision should look better each day.
- Keep your incision dry. Tape plastic wrap over your incision when showering. Remove the plastic wrap and tape after you shower.
- Change your dressing every day or more often if it becomes saturated.
- Stitches and/or staples will be removed at your follow-up appointment after surgery.

- Do not take tub baths for 6 weeks after surgery or until your incision is completely healed.

## When should I call my Care Team?

Call your Care Team at 651-259-4562 if you have:

- a temperature of 101°F or higher.
- yellow or green drainage or more than a slight amount of bloody drainage from your incision.
- redness, swelling, or warmth around your incision.
- new or unusual pain, numbness, or tingling.
- any bowel or bladder changes.
- an opening in your incision.
- pain in your calf or pressure in your legs.
- questions or concerns.

## How long do I have to wear my brace?

- Wear your brace at all times (except when you shower) unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- Wear your brace until your doctor tells you to gradually stop. This is usually three to six months after surgery.

## Do I need physical therapy?

- Walking is the best exercise to regain your strength and endurance.
- Start by walking short distances several times each day.
- Slowly increase the distance you are walking as tolerated.
- Listen to your body. If you feel sore or pain, cut back the amount of walking until you are more comfortable.
- Talk with your doctor about the need for physical therapy at your follow-up appointment.

Call 651-259-4562 to talk with your health care team if you have any questions about your surgery.