

MIS Microdiscectomy post op instructions

MIS Microdiscectomy involves one small incision (1.5cm). Through this I will use a surgical microscope to create a window in the lamina (back of the spine) and remove the disc that is pressing on your nerves causing pain.

Hospital stay

This depends on a few factors such as age, co-morbidities and number of levels. Typically, patients go home the day of surgery and occasionally patients leave the following morning. Going home requires your pain to be controlled and an assessment that you are safe on your feet. If required, we can arrange a visiting nurse to check on you.

Incision

You can shower 48 hours after the surgery. If you have any drainage from the incision, cover with a waterproof dressing first. Don't aim the water jet directly at the incision, just let the water run over the area. Pat the area dry, don't scrub at the area (this will help keep the scar small). Do not put any lotions or creams on the incision for at least a month, as these interfere with healing.

Avoid submerging the incision (bath or pool) until the incision has been dry, with no drainage for 7 days.

The incision will be covered with Steri-Strips. These will fall off on their own but if they are coming loose and annoying you, feel free to trim them carefully with scissors.

Brace

Wear the brace only for your comfort. Typically patients only need it for a couple of days. Wearing the brace for a long time can weaken the supporting muscles and lead to stiffness down the line.

Pain medications

Typically, patients take Tramadol, Tylenol, and a muscle relaxant for a few days after surgery. This of course depends on what medication you were taking before surgery and is tailored to your situation.

Activities

Walking is the best rehab and you can do as much of this as you want from day one. After two weeks, if you want to do something more vigorous, you can use a stationary bike, an elliptical trainer, or walk against water in the pool. Avoid running or any resistance activity until at least 6 weeks after surgery to prevent more disc from squeezing out before you have healed and pressing on the nerves again.

Typical problems

Most patients do very well, with relief of leg pain immediately after surgery, but some back pain related to the incisions. This settles quickly over a few days. Occasionally, if your nerves were really tight, they can get inflamed temporarily after surgery and cause pain. If this occurs, we will give you some oral steroids to help settle this down faster.

Most patients will notice some bruising around the incision. This will settle on its own.

Post op visits

A typical schedule is listed below, but this is tailored for your individual circumstances:

First post op visit is around 2 weeks following surgery

Second visit is 6 weeks following surgery

Third visit is 3 months following surgery

Fourth visit is 6 months following surgery