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Patient's Guide To A Smooth Postoperative Recovery

### Before Your Lumbar Fusion Surgery

It's a good idea to plan ahead before your surgery. Try to get a day to get things taken care of before the surgery, so you can concentrate on healing.

- If you will be wearing a brace, make sure that you have clothes that fit over the brace, as well as comfortable tee-shirts that fit under the brace.
- Do any shopping that you need taken care of before surgery. You will not feel like shopping in the early weeks following your surgery.
- If you are the one in charge of the cooking, prepare meals ahead of surgery and freeze them in individual containers. This will enable you to microwave your meal portions. You will not feel like standing long enough to cook right after surgery.
- If you want to get your hair cut short for ease of care, arrange this prior to surgery.
- Place things that you use the most between the level of your waist and chest. You will not be able to do any bending for some time following your surgery.
- Take care of any banking issues you may have prior to surgery. Initially following surgery, you will not feel like riding in a car for any length of time.

### Helpful Aides To Have On Hand

Below are some useful aides, which may be purchased through home care sections of local pharmacies. Consider discussing these with your primary care physician:

- Elastic shoe laces and long shoe horns to use with your laced walking shoes (you will not be able to bend in the brace.)
- You may wish to have a body pillow (full body-length pillow) for propping or hugging while resting or sleeping.
- A raised toilet seat may be a great help, as getting up and down can be a definite strain in the early days after your surgery.
- A reaching device or "grabber" so you can easily get a dropped medication bottle or an item that is placed on a high shelf.
- One or more containers capped glasses, or bottles with spouts from which you can drink while lying down.
- A plastic shower stool since you may feel more confident with the support

- in the shower, especially if you are taking pain medication.
- **Most important is a positive attitude.** Since your emotional well-being is very important to your having a good recovery, think about things you can stock up on before surgery that will keep your spirits up after your back surgery. Have things that you enjoy on hand like magazines, books, crossword puzzles, or movies.