

Anterior Cervical Decompression and Fusion ACDF

Information about your Neurosurgical Procedure

An ACDF is an anterior cervical decompression and fusion. This is a surgical approach from the front of the neck to do a decompression of the spinal cord and spinal nerves with a fusion to prevent future problems at that level. It is done when the vertebral bodies of the spine are out of alignment, from disc herniation, injury or degeneration. A bony fusion is placed in the disc space and plates are used to stabilize the spinal vertebra. It is designed to create solid bone between the 2 adjoining vertebra, eliminating any movement between the bones. After surgery the mobility of the spine is limited as the 2 levels are fused into one. The goal of the surgery is to reduce pain and alleviate spinal cord and nerve root compression.

Surgical Preparation: Medical history and physical examination, EKG, chest x-ray, blood tests are required this can be done by your primary MD or by our NP.

If you take aspirin, ibuprofen products, anticoagulant medications (blood thinners) or fish oil, ginkgo biloba or vitamin E you will need to stop these one-two weeks before your surgery.

The Night before Surgery: You will be given written instructions to call the operating room the day before surgery to find out what time to be there. Keep in mind, an unexpected emergency for Dr. Li can delay your surgery.

NOTHING to eat or drink after midnight the night before surgery.

Take only medications you have been instructed to take on the morning of surgery.

Day of Surgery: Please arrive at the same day surgical center at the designated time. Your family can wait in the family waiting room during the surgery. Dr. Li will call them there after the operation is done.

After Surgery: You will be in the hospital until you eat, walk and go to the bathroom normally. Your post-surgical discomfort will initially be managed with IV pain medications and will be weaned to oral medications. Once you are on all oral medications and you are walking you will be discharged home. You may be evaluated for physical therapy and home care needs during this time. Discharge time is before 11:00 am.

At Home: You will have good and bad days depending on your activity level. Walking is encouraged, and stairs are OK. Do not lift over 10 lbs. for the first 2 weeks and avoid activities involving lifting overhead. Avoid strenuous activity, including sexual activity for 2 weeks. Gradually increase activity as directed, if you have pain with any activity STOP.

Gradually wean off your pain medications as directed. Opioid pain medication refill requests should be made a week in advance. Do not get constipated as this will increase your discomfort, over the counter stool softeners and adequate fluid intake generally works to prevent this.

You may return to work in 4-8 weeks depending on your job duties.

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If you have any questions about any part of the surgical experience please call the office at 585-276-3049

MEDICINE of THE HIGHEST ORDER

