



PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET  
SACROILIAC FUSION  
NICHOLAS SHEPARD, MD

**Before Surgery**

- Stop Aspirin, ibuprofen, or other type anti-inflammatory medications 1-2 weeks before surgery.
- Stop smoking as it slows healing, delays and/or prevents fusion, and increase the risk of infection.
- Please make appropriate arrangements for work absence, transportation home after surgery and assistance at home for a week or two. You might be able to start driving in 4-8 weeks.
- You should not eat or drink anything after midnight before surgery. If you do not follow this rule, your surgery will likely be cancelled.
- You should bring a list of your regular medications with you to the hospital so they can be put in your chart.
- You might consider taking a laxative 2 days before surgery to help prevent problems with constipation after surgery.
- In preparation for your future surgery, please take 2 Extra Strength Tylenol (500mg each / 1000mg Total) 3 times a day for 4 days leading up to your surgery. There is good evidence that this will reduce your post-operative pain medication usage

**Surgery**

You will be put to sleep for surgery. The procedure takes approximately 1 hour. You will then be in the recovery room for approximately 2 hours. You will notice incisional pain and swelling in your back/buttock area. **The day after surgery, you will start walking with a walker or crutches at 50% weight bearing for 6 weeks.**

This surgical procedure involves making a small incision along the side of your buttock (approx. 3cm long). You may have a pain pump directly into your bone graft harvest site to decrease the chance that you will have pain there. Metal screws and rods are applied to the joint to hold it in place to help you become fused.

**After Surgery**

You may notice soreness in your throat from the breathing tube. A catheter will be present in your bladder. There will be a tube coming from the dressing to allow drainage from the wound. You will have discomfort in your lower back and possibly your legs as well. You will be allowed some ice chips and clear liquids and then a regular diet the evening and usually a regular diet the following morning.

Your dressing will be changed the third day after your surgery and then daily while you are in the hospital or do this yourself at home if you are outpatient. Once you feel able, you may shower and have the water run over the wound. **DO NOT IMMERSE YOURSELF IN A BATH OR LET THE WOUND SOAK IN WATER.** After

you shower, you should pat the incision dry and apply a new, clean bandage. You may discontinue applying the bandage once there is no drainage on the bandage when it is removed. A glue-type substance will be placed over the wound and all the stitches under the skin. There are no stitches or staples to remove. You might be provided with a brace for comfort. You only have to wear it when you are up and around. You ordinarily do not need this when in bed or just getting up to go to the bathroom.

You should not bend over or twist at the waist, drive or lift more than 8-10 pounds until you are told by the physician to advance your activities. Walking is the best therapy. Gradually increase your walking distance and time each day. In general, you may resume driving 4-8 weeks after surgery when you are off narcotic medication, feel comfortable, and are able to move your legs to react in an emergency situation. At approximately 4-6 months, you will be allowed to do some bending and increase your lifting. You should be able to perform moderate activities at 3 months.

**You will be 50% weight bearing on the surgical side with the assistance of crutches or a walker until your 6 week post-op visit.**

You should contact us if you have a temperature of 101.5 degrees, redness around the incision, unusual drainage, increasing pain, either in the back or legs, unusual swelling around the incision, headaches, increasing weakness, bladder difficulties, or any other concerns.

A prescription for pain medication will be provided to you prior to discharge. This is narcotic medication and you should take appropriate precautions when using this type of medication. **DO NOT LOSE THIS PRESCRIPTION.** It will not be refilled until an appropriate amount of time has transpired between refills.

**You may call the office between 8AM and 4PM, Monday through Friday to refill your prescription. Please allow 24-48 hours for refills to be approved. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE ADEQUATE PAIN MEDICATION.**

If you feel as though you may need a refill, please call when you have about 15 tablets remaining so that there is ample time to supply a refill. Do not call for refills after 5PM. Your prescription will not be refilled.

Dr. Shepard's partners have been instructed to not refill narcotic medication when they are on call.

**When your surgery is scheduled, please make sure a 2 week and 6 week post op appointment is scheduled. If you do not have an appointment, please call our office to schedule one at 615-267-6800**

If you have ANY questions, or problems, please do not hesitate to contact the office. We are ALWAYS available for any concerns you may have and want you to have the best surgical result possible.

## **DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS**

### *SACROILIAC FUSION*

DR. NICHOLAS SHEPARD

#### **What to expect post-operatively:**

1. It is not uncommon for people to still have some residual leg numbness or pain after surgery. Back pain is also common
2. You will have limits of your energy level, endurance, etc. for some time after surgery. Your body is using a lot of energy to heal after surgery. Get plenty of rest and eat well.
3. Do not smoke as it delays healing and increases the risk of infection.
4. Stay at 50% weight bearing on surgical side until your 6 week post-operative visit

#### **Activities:**

1. It is okay for you to begin moving your back in all directions as your comfort allows.
2. You may ride in a car, but you should not drive until you are off pain medications during the day, and feel safe to do so.
3. Avoid lifting more than 10lbs (about the weight of a gallon of milk).
4. We will discuss increasing your activities at your follow-up visit.
5. If you have been given a brace, it should be snug and worn whenever you are seated, standing or walking.

#### **Hygiene:**

1. You may shower and allow the water to run over your wound 3 days after surgery. There is a glue-like substance that seals the wound. **DO NOT TAKE A BATH** or soak the wound in water.
2. Pat the wound dry and apply a new, clean bandage if there is still drainage from the wound. You can discontinue the bandage if there is no drainage.
3. Try to avoid scrubbing across the wound when you shower.

#### **Diet and Medications:**

1. You may return to your regular diet as soon as you feel like it.
2. Pain medications and anesthesia may make you constipated. Consider using a stool softener and/or laxative until you are regular again.
3. Resume your regular medications unless otherwise advised.

#### **Pain Control:**

1. You will be provided with appropriate pain medications. Please follow the prescription instructions.
2. **After 2-3 days out, you can start taking Tylenol 1000mg and a muscle relaxant three times a day instead of a pain pill.**

#### **Call the office at ANY time at 615-267-6800 if you have problems such as:**

1. Fever over 101.5 degrees that persists over 6 hours.
2. A substantial increase in you back and leg pain.
3. Sudden weakness in your arms or legs.
4. Redness or swelling from the wound.
5. If you develop a severe headache when you sit/stand up.
6. Any loss of control of your bowel or bladder function.
7. Persistent or increasing drainage from the wound.

***Any other questions, call my medical assistant at 615-267-6800 ext 1082***

***If you are in severe distress, go to STONECREST HOSPITAL ER.***