

Road to Recovery



Spine Center



MemorialCare[™]
Orthopedic & Spine Institute



Welcome

Thank you for choosing the MemorialCare Orthopedic & Spine Institute at Long Beach Medical Center. Your decision to have elective spine surgery is the first step toward a healthier lifestyle.

The guidebook will provide you with all the necessary information to help promote a more successful recovery and outcome.

This guidebook will review:

- Preparing for your spine surgery.
- What to expect before your surgery.
- What to expect on the day of your surgery.
- How to care for your spine at home.



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Your Spine Center Team

We are committed to providing you with quality care for a successful recovery. Your spine center team includes:

- Neurosurgeon or Orthopedic Spine Surgeon.
- Physician Assistant (PA).
- Nurse Practitioner (NP).
- Registered Nurse (RN).
- Physical Therapist (PT).
- Occupational Therapist (OT).
- Nurse Case Manager.
- Spine Center Program Manager.

This multidisciplinary team collaborates closely with one another to provide ongoing support to ensure your care needs are met during your entire hospital stay.



Contact Information

MemorialCare Orthopedic & Spine Institute (MOSI) at Long Beach Medical Center

Phone	(562) 933-4014
Email	LBMCMOSI@memorialcare.org

Other Important Long Beach Medical Center Phone Numbers

Main Hospital	(562) 933-2000
Admissions	(562) 933-1335
PREP Unit	(562) 933-1030
PREP Scheduler	(562) 933-1042

Preparing for Your Surgery



Two to Four Weeks Before Your Surgery

- Schedule an appointment with your primary care physician four weeks before your surgery and ask if any other physician specialists (cardiologist, etc.) should be involved in your pre-operative review.
- Complete all required surgery elements as ordered by your surgeon. (Please see My Surgery Checklist on page 23)
- Schedule your pre-admit testing appointment by calling the pre-admit testing office at (562) 933-1030.
- Plan for your discharge from the hospital.
- Review your medication list with your primary care physician and surgeon to confirm which medications to stop and continue, as there are certain medications that must be stopped for a specific time period before your surgery. If you are on any blood pressure, blood thinners, and/or SGLT2i or GLP1 medications, please confirm medication management with your provider(s).
- For your health, consider quitting smoking.
- Register for the Spine Center Preoperative Education Class at least two weeks before your surgery.

Speak with your physician about quitting smoking or call 800-NOBUTTS (662-8887) for tips and programs designed to help you quit.



Long Beach Medical Center also offers **Freedom from Smoking classes**. Please call (562) 480-7747 or scan the QR code for class listings and to register.

Spine Surgery Preoperative Education Class

We are focused on your entire journey, not just your surgery. The Spine Center Team is here for you every step of the way, from consultation through rehabilitation.

This preoperative education class will prepare you for:

- Understanding your medical clearance requirements prior to surgery.
- What to expect before, during and after your surgery.
- How to prepare your home in advance for your recovery and care for your spine.
- Meeting members of your care team and an opportunity to ask questions.

Scan the QR code



[to enroll in the in-person class.](#)



[to watch a recorded video.](#)

Please call (562) 933-4014 for any questions or if you need assistance with registering.

Preparing for Your Surgery

(continued)



Your Coach

Your coach can be a family member or a friend who will be with you to help you before, during and after your hospital stay. Your coach should be physically capable, available and actively involved in all steps of your spine surgery journey.

It is recommended that your coach:

- Accompany you to doctor visits.
- Encourage you and help you with pre- and post-operative exercises.
- Attend the Spine Surgery Preoperative Education Class with you.
- Help you prepare your home for after your hospital stay.
- Be present for discharge instructions and help you follow those instructions.
- Be available to drive you home upon discharge, help you settle in at home and stay with you for at least 24 hours.

Preparing Your Home

Begin preparing your home for your return after your spine surgery.

Here is a list of suggestions on what you can do to prepare:

- Complete your grocery shopping and prepare/freeze meals.
- Make simple meals that will be ready for you when you get home.
- Move furniture to make clear walking paths throughout your home.
- Place a non-skid bathmat or shower chair in your tub or shower.
- Place frequently used items at arm level between your waist and shoulders in your kitchen and bathroom.
- Pick up throw rugs and tack down loose carpeting. Cover slippery surfaces with carpets that are firmly anchored to the floor or that have non-skid backs.
- Be aware of all floor hazards such as pets, small objects or uneven surfaces.
- Keep extension cords and other cables out of pathways. Do not run wires under rugs — this is a fire hazard.

One Week Before Your Surgery

- Attend your scheduled pre-admit testing (PAT) phone appointment.
- Do not shave below your neck, especially 2 days prior to your surgery date.
- Discontinue medications as advised by your physician. This includes over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements and any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) like Aspirin, Ibuprofen, or Aleve®.
- If you are on a beta-blocker medication, consult your physician.
- If you are on blood thinners, such as Coumadin® (Warfarin), please consult your physician about proper management before your surgery.
- If you are on SGLT2i medications, such as Jardiance or Invokana, or GLP1 medications, such as Ozempic or Wegovy, please consult your physician about proper management before your surgery.

What to Expect Before Your Surgery



The Day Before Surgery

- A team member from the pre-admissions team will call you and provide you with your check-in time, which is typically two hours prior to your scheduled surgery time. If your surgery is scheduled on a Monday, you will receive a call on the preceding Friday.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight, unless otherwise directed by your physician.
- Perform skin preparation by showering and lathering your body with an antibacterial soap — it is important not to use lotions, creams or deodorant afterward. Change into clean pajamas and sleep on freshly laundered bed linens.

The Morning of Your Surgery

- On the morning of your surgery, take only the medications you were instructed to take by your physician or anesthesiologist.
- Please leave all valuables at home, including jewelry, credit cards, money and electronic devices.
- You may repeat and perform skin preparation by showering and lathering your body with an antibacterial soap — remember, it is important not to use lotions, creams or deodorant afterward. Wear freshly laundered clothes to the hospital.

What to Bring to the Hospital

- Photo ID card.
- Medical insurance card.
- Durable power of attorney or advanced directive.
- Hearing aids, dentures, glasses or contacts (if applicable).
- CPAP settings (if applicable).
- List of current medications including name, dosage and frequency.
- Loose-fitting clothes for therapy after your surgery — preferably shorts and shirts. No open-toe shoes — slip-ons with secure heels are recommended.

Day of Surgery

Checking in for Your Surgery

- Check in at the Surgery Pavilion entrance located on Columbia Street at the time provided to you by the Pre-Admissions Team.
- After you have checked in, you will be escorted to the pre-operative area and begin all surgery preparation as instructed by the preoperative team. Please provide the team with the names and phone numbers of your identified coach and/or emergency contacts during this time.
- You will meet your surgeon and anesthesiologist before your surgery. This is the time when you can ask any remaining questions you may have regarding your surgery and recovery.
- Sometimes there are delays in the surgery schedule. We will keep you informed if any delays occur.

After Your Surgery

- You will be taken to the recovery room, and the post-anesthetic recovery team will monitor your vital signs frequently. Please note that you may have a wound drain and/or a urinary catheter, which will be cared for and monitored by your care team.
- We will be asking you to rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10, with zero being no pain. You should expect that your pain level will be at approximately 4 to 6 when engaged in activity, and between 2 to 4 at rest. You may be given pain medication, depending on your pain level, and will be offered ice packs to use for pain, which you may take home for pain and swelling control.
- Depending on the type of spine surgery, you may be discharged on the same day. However, your safety is our top priority, and the decision will be made collectively by you and your care team if you feel ready and have been cleared by our therapists to perform daily activities and exercises without any issues.
- If the plan is to stay in hospital overnight or for several days, you will be transferred to the inpatient Spine Unit on the 4th Floor. Your stay on this unit will begin the post-operative/rehabilitation phase of your recovery.

Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation



Your motivation and participation in physical and/or occupational therapy are essential elements for a successful recovery. You must play an active role in every step of your rehabilitation.

Our care team will work with you to achieve important goals, including

- Regaining independence and mobility.
- Developing a program for walking.
- Understanding proper body mechanics.

The following spine precautions are applicable to both neck and back:

- **No bending.**
- **No lifting more than 5 to 10 pounds.**
- **No twisting.**

It is important that you stay active once you are home and adhere to the post-operative exercises recommended for your spine.

Remember to use the cold wrap after therapy to help with pain and reduce any swelling.

Outpatient physical therapy, if recommended by your surgeon, will typically begin 6 to 8 weeks after your surgery, depending on your surgeon's preference.

Caring for Your Spine at Home



Wound & Dressing Care

- You will likely have dressing placed over your incision at the time of surgery. Unless otherwise instructed, dressings are to be left in place and untouched until you see your surgeon.
- Keep the incision/wound area clean and dry.
- You are allowed to shower. However, you must refrain from submerging the dressing in water – no bathtubs, hot tubs or swimming until you get clearance from your surgeon.
- Your surgeon will remove the dressing at your first post-operative appointment.
- You may have swelling in your ankle. It is important that you elevate your leg above your heart when lying in bed or on the couch and apply a cold wrap for 15 minutes or as needed.

Diet

- Continue to drink plenty of fluids and implement both a high-quality protein diet for your recovery and a high-fiber diet to help you from getting constipated.
- If you are on Coumadin® (Warfarin), avoid excessive intake of vitamin K. Foods rich in vitamin K include liver, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, green beans, spinach, kale, lettuce, cabbage and onions.
- Try to limit coffee intake and avoid alcohol. You should also monitor your weight to avoid putting excess stress on your joints.

Medication

- Take all ordered medications as directed. Please consult with your doctor if you have any questions regarding any medications.
- You will be prescribed a blood thinner to prevent clots from forming in the veins of your leg. These clots can be life-threatening. If a blood clot forms and then breaks free, it could travel to your lungs, resulting in a pulmonary embolism, a potentially fatal condition.
- Reduced physical activity and/or narcotics (pain medication) can lead to constipation. Make sure you have a laxative of your choice on hand and ready to use at home.

Resuming Normal Activities

- Never drive while you are using narcotics (pain medication). Obtain clearance from your surgeon for when driving is safe for you.
- Your surgeon will advise you on when it is safe for you to return to work.
- Consult your surgeon before participating in any recreational or sporting activities.

Symptoms & When to Call Your Surgeon

Normal symptoms

- Pain, bruising, stiffness and/or swelling
- Small amount of redness around the surgery site
- Clear, red or pink drainage
- Minor constipation
- An upset stomach, but still able to keep food down
- No fever, or a fever of less than 101°F

Call your surgeon if you have any of these symptoms

- Worsening pain and/or swelling where elevation and/or ice packs do not help
- Worsening redness around the surgery site that spreads, and/or the surgery site begins to pull apart
- New and/or increasing drainage that soaks through the dressing, or is foul-smelling, green, yellow or cloudy drainage
- Increased heart rate or heart palpitations
- Constipation that does not improve with stool medications
- Dark, tarry or bloody stools
- Worsening upset stomach, nausea and/or vomiting
- Fever greater than 101°F, with or without chills
- Feeling confused, or family thinks so
- Decreased mobility and/or difficulty with mobility, where more help is needed to do daily tasks

Present to the Emergency Department for the following symptoms

- Chest pain, pain in one or both arms, and/or jaw, neck or back pain
- Sudden severe headache
- New shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Sudden numbness or weakness (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden trouble walking and/or loss of balance
- Not able to urinate



If you cannot reach any of your doctors or if you have a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

If you go to the Emergency Department, please call your surgeon's office so your surgeon is aware.

Important Dates to Remember

My Preoperative Admit Testing (PAT)
Phone Appointment

DATE

TIME

My Surgery Date

DATE

ARRIVAL TIME

SURGERY TIME

Please check in at our **Surgery Pavilion** located on 455 E. Columbia Street.

My Surgery Checklist

The following elements may be required for your surgery. Please confirm with your surgeon's office and scheduler for your specific required elements.

- Health History & Physical.
- Blood Lab Tests.
- Medical Clearance (if needed).
- Chest X-Ray (if needed).
- Electrocardiogram (EKG) (if needed).
- Cardiac Clearance (if needed).
- Completion of the preoperative education class.
- Review medication list and stop any medications as discussed with your prescribing doctor(s).

Please remember that your required elements must be completed and reviewed at least 72 hours prior to your scheduled surgery date and may be subject to cancellation if not received.

Thank you for choosing the
MemorialCare Orthopedic & Spine Institute
at Long Beach Medical Center for your care.