

Frequently Asked Questions

When can I return to normal activities?

Please discuss specifics with your surgeon. In general, patients are able to:

- > Lift more than 8 pounds after 5 weeks
- > Sex in 2 weeks
- > Shower in 3 days
- > Stairs immediately

During a follow-up appointment after your surgery, ask your surgeon when it is appropriate to return to driving.

How long until I can return to work?

This is very individualized to you, the patient, and the type of work you do. Discuss this with your surgeon. Patients recovering from cervical fusions that have jobs where they are basically sitting behind a desk usually require 2-4 weeks of recovery before returning to work. More physically demanding jobs could take up to 3 months.

In general, it takes longer to get back to work following lumbar fusions. For sedentary work, it usually takes 4-6 weeks. For physical labor with light weight lifting, it takes 3 months. Most patients with jobs requiring heavy lifting can return to work after 6 months.

How long before I can travel?

Like many aspects of this journey, this too is very individualized. Traveling will depend on your ability to sit for an extended period of time and/or how much movement is required in your travel plans. We encourage you to not sit longer than 2 hours at a time without getting up and moving around, and to take frequent rest breaks, if needed.

What will my pain be like after surgery?

You will have some pain after the surgery, but this should be manageable with oral pain medication. Pain is a very individualized feeling. Your healthcare team will create a pain management plan in order to address your pain medication needs and help you feel as comfortable as possible.

What if I live alone?

Rest assured that you will not be discharged from the hospital unless there is a proper care plan in place that will allow you to remain safe. Most of these problems can be foreseen and addressed prior to your surgery.