

Physiotherapy following Cervical Spine Surgery



**ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**
NORTHSIDE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

This information is a general guide only.
Instructions and specific exercises may vary depending on your specific surgery and situation. Your surgeon or physiotherapist will inform you of any further instructions or limitations.
Please ask if there is anything you are unsure about.

Your physiotherapist: _____

Phone: 07 **3326 3000** Pager no. **0104**

Alternative contact: _____



Please contact your nurse
if you require an interpreter.

Physiotherapy following Cervical Spine Surgery

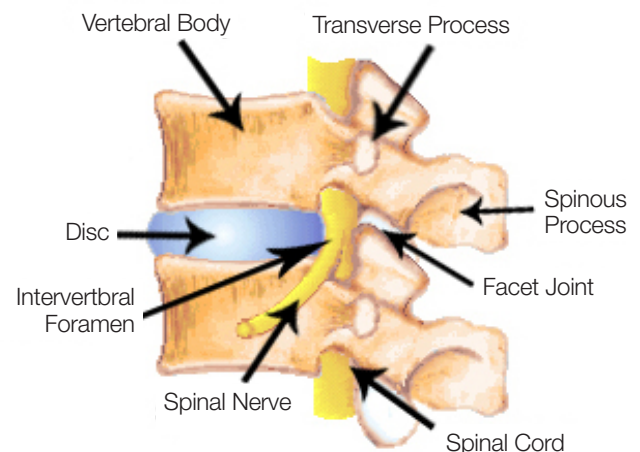
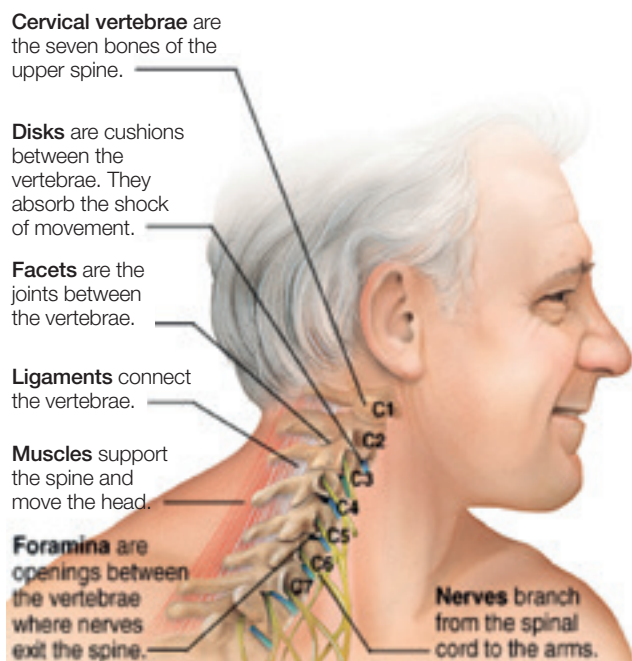
Welcome to St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside

Our Hospital's Orthopaedic Physiotherapy Team will work with you to regain normal function after your operation.

They will provide you with advice and a home exercise program to enable you to continue your rehabilitation at home.

Please take the time to read through the information in this booklet as it is relevant to your wellbeing and rehabilitation.

There is a Notes section at the back of this booklet for any questions you may wish to ask your physiotherapist.



General post-operative advice: *for your safety and care*

You must have regular pain medication so that you are able to walk and do the exercises given to you by your physiotherapist.

A variety of medications are used and we aim to provide sufficient pain relief with minimal side effects.

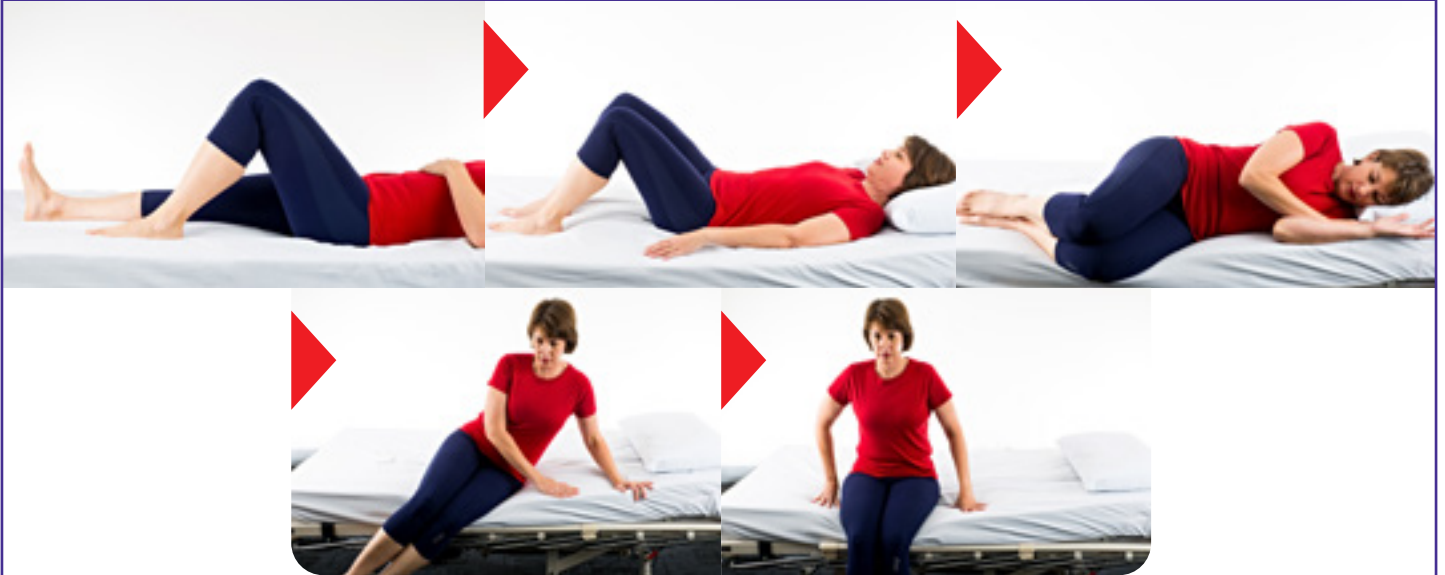
However, this does not mean you will be completely pain-free.

If we give you too much pain medication it can make you extremely sleepy and nauseated. These side effects can delay your recovery and can increase the risk of complications, such as blood clots.

You must let us know if you are feeling nauseated as it is impossible to walk and exercise well if you are nauseated.

General post-operative advice: *for your safety and care*

Getting in and out of bed



Getting out of bed

- Lie on your back, bring one leg up at a time until both knees are bent.
- Roll over to your side, using a bed stick or rail if required. Move your legs at the same time as you move your trunk. Keep your back straight as you turn (*this is called log rolling*).
- Push through your arms into a sitting position as you lower your legs down. This should avoid any twisting of the spine.

Getting into bed

- Sit onto the edge of the bed, lower down onto your side as your legs come up onto the bed. From your side, roll over onto your back, moving your trunk and legs at the same time.

Activities to avoid

- Avoid lifting anything heavier than 2kg for six (6) weeks after your surgery.
- Avoid over-head activities for six (6) weeks after your surgery.

Sitting and standing

Avoid sitting more than 20 minutes at a time. Try to change position regularly between standing, sitting, lying and walking.

Walking

Walking is the best exercise you can do after your surgery. A physiotherapist will ensure you are walking safely the day after your surgery.

By the time you leave hospital you should be comfortably walking for about ten (10) minutes, 5-6 times over the day.

Gradually increase your time and distance once you are home.

Exercises: *immediate post-operative*

These exercises can be started on the day of your surgery and it is a good idea to practice them before.

● Relaxed deep breathing

- Relax your shoulders and take a slow, deep breath in.
- Hold for three (3) seconds, and then slowly breathe out.
- After five (5) deep breaths have a strong cough.
- Repeat hourly when awake for the first two (2) days after your surgery.



● Foot and ankle pumps (to help circulation and prevent blood clots)

- Move your feet up and down from the ankles.
- Repeat ten (10) times every hour when awake.
- Make sure that you aren't just wiggling your toes, but that your whole foot is moving up and down.



● Thigh muscle (quadriceps) squeezes



- Straighten your knees and tighten your thigh muscles.
- Hold for five (5) seconds.
- Repeat ten (10) times every hour when awake.

● Bottom squeezes



- Squeeze your buttocks (gluteals) gently together.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat ten (10) times every hour when awake.

Exercises: *additional post-operative*

It is safe for you to gently move your head and neck after the surgery. Do these exercises either while sitting or standing.

Remember that it is normal to feel tired and a bit sore in the neck.

● Neck movements

- Gently take your chin down towards your chest, and then back to its normal position.
- Repeat five (5) times, three (3) times a day.



● Head turns

- Gently turn your head to one side, and then the other.
- Repeat five (5) times, three (3) times a day.



Exercises: *additional post-operative*

● Chin tucks

- Gently tuck your chin whilst looking straight ahead.
- Hold 3-5 seconds.
- Repeat five (5) times, three (3) times a day.



● Shoulder shrugs

- Gently shrug your shoulders up and down.
- Repeat five (5) times, three (3) times a day.



Exercises: *additional post-operative*

● Shoulder blade positioning

- Ensure your shoulders rest at the same height.
- Gently squeeze your shoulder blades together.
- Repeat five (5) times, three (3) times a day.



Will you need further physiotherapy?

Continue with the above exercises until your review with your surgeon.
Your surgeon may refer to a physiotherapist after the post-operative review, if necessary.

Notes



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627 Rode Road, Chermside QLD 4032

Phone: 07 3326 3000

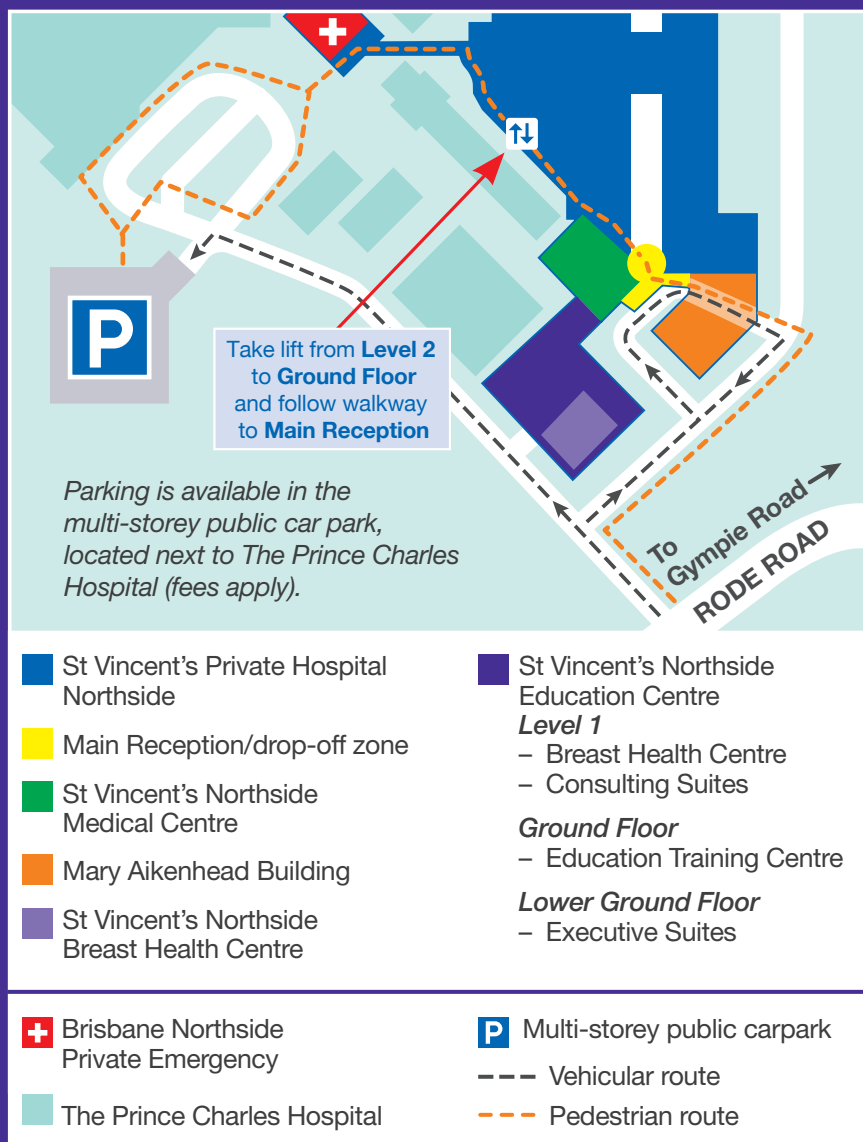
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Website: www.svphn.org.au

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Developed in consultation with our consumers (May 2017)

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF MARY AIKENHEAD MINISTRIES