SYDNEY
SPINE INSTITUTE

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PATIENT GUIDELINES

After Spinal Decompression or Microdiscectomy

General postoperative guidelines

> *Follow your hospital discharge instructions and any additional advice from your surgeon.*

After surgery

- **Hospital stay:** Usually 1–2 nights. You can go home once you are walking safely and your pain is controlled.
- **Symptom relief:** Arm or leg pain may improve quickly. Numbness, tingling and weakness can take longer to recover and may not fully resolve.
- **Pain and wound care:** Some wound discomfort is normal. Take prescribed pain relief and follow your discharge instructions for dressings, stitches and showering.
- **Follow-up:** Appointments with Professor van Gelder are usually arranged at 2 and 6 weeks.

The first 4–6 weeks

- **Walking:** Take short, regular walks and gradually increase your activity. Avoid prolonged bed rest.
- **Bending and lifting:** Avoid lifting more than 5 kg, excessive forward bending and twisting. Follow your surgeon's specific advice.
- **Driving:** Do not drive until cleared by Professor van Gelder, usually at your 2-week review. You must be able to sit, twist and turn comfortably, control the car safely, and not be affected by pain or medication.

Returning to work

Allow approximately 4 weeks off work initially, depending on your recovery and job demands. You may need lighter duties, regular breaks from sitting and temporary restrictions on lifting or bending. Discuss your return to work with your surgeon.

Physiotherapy and rehabilitation

A specialist spine physiotherapist can guide your exercises, help you regain confidence in movement and plan a safe return to normal activities and work.

Sydney Spine Institute offers spine physiotherapy and rehabilitation in Burwood. Ask our staff about other locations.

When to seek medical help

Contact your GP	If you develop a fever, increasing wound redness or discharge, or new or worsening symptoms. Notify our office after seeing your GP.
Emergency Department	Attend immediately if you develop new bladder or bowel problems, numbness around the groin or rapidly worsening weakness. Notify our office after seeking urgent care.
Call 000	For severe chest pain or shortness of breath.