Patient’s Clinical Pathway

**Lumbar Spine Surgery**
Check off each milestone during your stay. This will allow you and your family to monitor your program. It will also help in speeding your recovery! Keep in mind, depending upon your individual needs, your plan of care may differ from this plan.

**Before your hospital stay...**
- [ ] Arrange post-hospital help at home
- [ ] Have preoperative laboratory work and testing completed

**Questions for my doctor:**

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**Questions for my hospital caregivers**
(Case Manager, Social Worker, Physical Therapist, Nurses):

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Check off each milestone during your stay in the hospital.

### IN THE HOSPITAL

**Admission to the hospital, day of surgery:**
- Report to Ambulatory Surgery at the time you are asked to be there.
- In Ambulatory Surgery, you will be prepared for surgery.
- After surgery, you will be taken to the recovery room for approximately 1-2 hours.

**To your hospital room, after the recovery room:**
- You will have IV fluids, bandages covering your incision(s), drainage tubes (from your back surgical wound), and a urinary catheter.
- Your pain will be controlled by a Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA) pump. Let the nurse know if your pain is not controlled.
- You will have air-filled compression sleeves around your calves to improve circulation and prevent clots.
- You must continue with your breathing exercises.
- You may moisten your mouth with sips of water and ice chips.
- You will be turned at regular intervals and learn spinal precautions (safe moving techniques after a spinal operation).

**Postoperative Day 1:**
- You will continue to use the PCA pump for pain control.
- You will use spine precautions and the physical therapist will help you get out of bed and transfer to a chair.
- You may receive a blood transfusion (if your blood counts are low).
- You must continue with your breathing exercises.
- You will be turned at regular intervals.
- A case manager or social worker will visit you to discuss your post-hospital care.

**Postoperative Day 2:**
- You may start pain medication in pill form.
- You will progress with activities of daily living (ADLs): bathing, toileting, eating, putting on clothes, etc.
- You will progress further with physical therapy, concentrating on getting in and out of bed, sitting, and walking.
- The physical therapist will arrange for equipment to be sent home with you (walker, commode, etc.) to help maintain a safe home environment.
- You should start eating a clear liquid diet and eat all meals up in a chair.
- The urinary catheter may come out (depending on how well you are able to get around on your own).
- You must continue with your breathing exercises.

**Postoperative Day 3:**
- Your pain medication should be changed to pill form.
- Your dressings will be changed and the drains pulled (if you have any).
- The Physical Therapy and Nursing Staff will help you move around.
- You should walk 2-3 times today.
- You should start solid food and should eat all meals up in the chair.
- The urinary catheter may come out today.
- You must continue with your breathing exercises.
- A plan for your safe transport home should be in place. Ask your case manager or social worker if there are any questions regarding this plan.

**Postoperative Day 4 (Discharge Day):**
- Discharge medications should be discussed with your nurse.
- A family member should learn how to perform your dressing changes.
- Depending on your level of activity, wound healing, and general medical condition, you will be discharged.