

It will take four to eight weeks to recover from surgery. You may tire in these first weeks. Listen to your body. If you feel tired, do less and rest more. Your energy will come back slowly and you can start to do more. After about two months you will have all your old energy back.

Back to school

Most people feel well enough to return to school three to four weeks after the surgery. If you feel really well before this, by all means go back sooner. If you need an extra week to build up your energy, then take it. It is a good plan to attend half a day for the first few days. If you are off school longer than expected contact your school principal for advice about how to keep up with your work. You may also want to leave class a few minutes before others so that you can sit in the back of the classroom so that you can get up every so often so you don't get sore.

Care of the incision (scar)

You will be going home with a bandage covering your incision. It is important for someone to watch for any signs of infection. This would include new drainage on the bandage. If you notice drainage, it is important to have a look at the incision line. You want to see and report to your surgeon/ or nurse if

there any signs of infection such as redness, swelling, tenderness or increased warmth to touch around a particular area. Please call us with your concerns or questions. Keep your incision covered with a bandage until the staples are removed.

Most incisions are closed with staples. These must be taken out in 10-14 days. Your family doctor can do this if you live out of town. Make an appointment with him/her. If you live in Vancouver, you can come back to the orthopedic clinic. The nurse will remove them. Please make an appointment with him/her.

Once your staples are removed and your incision is dry, you may shower .It is best to shower rather than bath for the first month. You can wash the scar each day with a soft cloth. Use a mild soap and warm water. Someone will need to help you with this.

Aches, pains and funny feelings

The area around the incision will be numb and/or tender to the touch for a while. This is normal.

Some people have a strange feeling that takes a few months to go away. They feel that one leg

and foot is much warmer than the other. It comes from irritation to nerves during the surgery. It does not mean that anything is wrong.

You can expect some aches and pains from stress and strain on different parts of the body. These will fade as your muscles and joints adjust to the corrected spine.

Take your pain medicine if you are hurting. Don't wait too long. Take it before the pain is bad – mild pain is easier to control. Get a good night's rest. Rest helps healing. Take your medicine before bedtime if you have pain at night.

You may catch a cold, flu or other minor infection while recovering from surgery. If you feel really sick or have a fever, see your family physician.

Eating well

You may not feel like eating very much in the first few weeks. Some people lose weight. Make sure that what you do eat is nutritious. Try to eat enough calories to keep your energy up. Your appetite will slowly return.

Some pain medicine has codeine in it. You may become constipated from it. High fibre foods like whole grain breads and cereals, and

fruits, like prunes and oranges, help keep your bowels moving! Also, drink plenty of fluids.

Iron

If you took iron pills before the surgery, continue taking them until the bottle is finished. If they make you sick or constipated don't take them.

Travel

You can travel home by car or plane. Buckle up in the usual way. Take your pain medicine ½ hour before you set off. Have a stretch break from time to time.

Getting back into the swing of things

At first you may be frustrated by how much help you may need with simple things like dressing and getting in and out of bed. Be patient - you will soon be independent again.

For the first six to eight weeks you can walk, stand and climb stairs as much as you feel up to. Use the following chart as a guide for when to begin activities.

Activity	Month				
	0-1	1-3	3-6	6-12	12-24
Shower/bath	✓				
Climb stairs	✓				
School	✓				
Walking	✓				
Lift 0-5 lbs.	✓				
Driving	✓				
Bicycling	X	✓			
Swimming	X	✓			
Light jogging	X	X	✓		
Lift 5-25 lbs.	X	✓			
Skating	X	X	X	✓	
Skiing	X	X	X	X	✓
Bowling	X	X	X	✓	
Amusement rides	X	X	X	✓	
Contact sports	X	X	X	X	✓
Lift 25 lb. +	X	X	X	✓	
Phys. Ed.	X	X	X	X	?
Horse riding (no jumps)	X	X	X	✓	
Gymnastics	X	X	X	X	X
Skateboard	X	X	X	X	12 mo.
Water slide	X	X	X	X	12 mo.

Your orthopedic surgeon will want to see you in six to eight weeks. In the first week at home, phone for an appointment.

If you have questions, write them down before you come so that you do not forget to ask them. However, if you are worried about something please phone for advice at any time.

The surgeon will want to check your spine at least once a year until you are 21-years-old.

We wish you a speedy recovery!

Notes:

At B.C.'s Children's Hospital we believe parents are partners on the health care team. We want you to be as informed as possible.

This brochure will answer some of your questions. Please ask about things you do not understand, and share your concerns.

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Caring For Yourself After Surgery To Correct Scoliosis



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