POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR LUMBAR MICRODISCECTOMY
The surgical procedure you have undergone is called “LUMBAR MICRODISCECTOMY.”

Your role now is to become an active participant in your recovery. The following instructions are intended to assist you in beginning your recovery.

ACTIVITIES-The first week after surgery, you should be up and walking about the house. This is a time of healing, so remember not to overdo any activity. Your body needs adequate rest. Activities around the house, such as washing dishes, fixing light meals, and your own personal care are fine. Avoid strenuous activities, such as vacuuming, lifting laundry or grocery bags. Do not lift anything heavier than 1 gallon of milk (or about 5-8 pounds) and limit bending. Bend with your knees if you need to pick up something from the floor. After the first week, you may gradually increase your activities, but still avoid heavy lifting, pushing/pulling. Walking is the best way to rebuild strength and stamina. Start SLOWLY and gradually increase the distance a little every week. Walk at a pace that avoids fatigue or severe pain. Do not try to walk several blocks the first day! As you increase the distance, you may feel tired. You should be able to walk several blocks by your first clinic visit.

BATHING and INCISION CARE-The incision may be tender to touch or feel numb—this is normal. Keep the incision clean and dry. You may shower, but be sure to dry the area thoroughly after your shower. The incision will be closed with steri-strips (small strips of tape) on the skin. The steri-strips should fall off on their own in about 7-10 days. If they have not come off in 10 days, you can soften them with a warm moist wash cloth and gently pull them off. Do not apply any lotions, ointments or oils on the incision. If you notice any swelling, redness, drainage or heat around the incision, notify the office immediately.

DRIVING -You should not drive for about 3-4 weeks after surgery. You can be a passenger in the vehicle for short distances, but if you travel any long distance, please stop about every 30 minutes and walk/stretch. You should NEVER drive while taking narcotic medications.
**RETURN TO WORK**- The decision to return to work will be determined on an individual basis. Many people who have a strenuous job (construction, heavy labor, etc) may need to be off work for up to 6 weeks. If you need a work release, please let us know as soon as possible, and not the same day you are planning to return to work.

**NUTRITION**- Good nutrition is an essential part of healing. You should eat a balanced diet each day, including fruits, vegetables, dairy products and protein. Remember to drink plenty of water. If you have not had a bowel movement within 3 days of surgery, you will need to use a laxative (such as correctol, Ex-Lax or Dulcolox).

**MEDICATIONS**- You may resume the medications you were taking before surgery. You will receive a prescription for pain medication at discharge from the hospital. The pain medication works best if taken before the pain becomes severe. To reduce stomach upset, always take the medication with food. Begin to wean yourself off the pain medication during the first week after discharge. If you need a refill, please call the office during working hours at least 2 days before your prescription runs out. Do not wait until your bottle is empty to call for a refill. **DO NOT** drive if you are taking narcotic pain medications.

**CALL THE OFFICE:**

- If you have severe pain unrelieved by the medications, new numbness or tingling in your neck, arms or hands;
- If you have a fever 100.4 or greater.
- If you notice swelling, redness, heat or drainage from the incision or IV site.

The office number is 573-884-BACK (2225) – Press Option 0 then Option2 - from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. After 5:00 pm, on weekends, or holidays, please call the University Hospital operator at 573-882-4141 and ask for the Orthopaedic resident on call.

It has been our pleasure to assist you in your recovery.