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1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 It is the policy of Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital to provide a patient focused physiotherapy service delivered by chartered physiotherapists and support staff working in a well-equipped environment.

1.2 It is the policy of Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital to provide health professionals and the public with the necessary advice and guidance on physiotherapy rehabilitation.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this guideline is to advise health professionals and patients on the physiotherapy rehabilitation of a person undergoing spinal discectomy and decompression surgery.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This guideline applies to all staff involved in the care of a person undergoing spinal discectomy and decompression surgery, community staff involved in the pre and post-operative care of the patient, the patient and their family.

4.0 Health & Safety

4.1 There are health and safety risks involved in patient care, namely risk of physical injury to patient and staff, risk of infection.

4.2 Physiotherapists have the necessary qualifications and clinical experience to carry out this guideline and to supervise unqualified support staff.

4.3 They must be eligible for membership of their professional body, the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP).

4.4 They undertake mandatory manual handling, basic life support training, fire safety, infection prevention and control and risk management.

4.5 They complete a minimum of 100 hours continuing professional development every three years as required by the ISCP.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of physiotherapists to implement this guideline.
6.0 Definitions and Abbreviations

Spinal Discectomy  Removal of a protruding intervertebral disc segment

Spinal Decompression  Surgery to relieve pressure on a compressed nerve root, often due to a protruding disc or degenerative changes in the bony spinal column.

7.0 Guideline

7.1 Pre-Operative

7.1.1 Patients should be evaluated prior to surgery, including:

7.1.1.1 Assessment of joint range of motion, muscle strength, mobility and general function.

7.1.1.2 Respiratory status.

7.1.1.3 Explanation of post-operative physiotherapy management, including respiratory and circulatory exercises.

7.1.1.4 Teaching independent bed mobility, log rolling and transfers.

7.1.1.5 Pre-operative activity programme.

7.2 Post-Operative

7.2.1 Day 1

7.2.1.1 Assess respiratory status and treat as appropriate.

7.2.1.2 Encourage circulatory exercises, isometric abdominals, quadriceps and gluteal exercises, neck and shoulder range of movement.

7.2.1.3 Stand patient when comfortable and stable, progress mobility as able.

7.2.1.4 A neofract jacket may be requested by the surgeon.

7.2.1.5 Sitting for short periods allowed as comfortable.

7.2.2 When fit (day 1-2)

7.2.2.1 Attend gym.

7.2.2.2 Progress mobility, unaided where possible.

7.2.2.3 Attain independence with bed mobility.

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7.2.2.4 Assess safety on stairs.
7.2.2.5 Provide appropriate home exercise programme.
7.2.2.6 Restore range of movement at hips and lumbar spine.
7.2.2.7 Strengthen core stability.
7.2.2.8 Neural stretches - straight leg raise.
7.2.2.9 Advice on general back care and posture.
7.2.2.10 Discharge when pain controlled, independently mobile and independent with home exercise programme.

7.3 Discharge Advice
7.3.1 Sitting - Discectomies restricted to 10 minutes for the first 2 weeks, 20 minutes up to 6 weeks and then as comfortable. Decompressions can sit as comfortable.
7.3.2 Driving - None for 2 weeks, then short journeys only for 2-6 weeks.
7.3.3 Walking - no restrictions, aim for a mile.
7.3.4 Swimming - after 2 weeks.
7.3.5 Return to office work - after 2-4 weeks.
7.3.6 Return to physical work - after 6-8 weeks.
7.3.7 Return to sport – after 3 months.
7.3.8 Out patient follow up arranged as necessary, usually 4-6 weeks after surgery:
   • Aim for full range, strength and core stability.
   • Education regarding back care
8.0 Related Documents
   Individual Physio tools exercise sheets
   IM-CNOH-21 Back Care Advice Booklet - Patient Information Booklet

9.0 Appendices
   9.1 Lumbar Discectomy - Advice for Patients
   9.2 Lumbar Decompression - Advice for Patients

10.0 References
    N/A
APPENDIX 9.1  Lumbar Discectomy - Advice for Patients
The following instructions are general and may be changed by your doctor depending on your surgery.

9.1.1  Sitting
- For first 2 weeks limit sitting to 10 minutes or less.
- Between 2-6 weeks increase sitting time to 20 minutes.
- After 6 weeks go back to sitting as normal but always maintain good posture.

9.1.2  The Journey Home by Car
- Sit on the passenger side, recline the seat and if necessary place a small rolled towel or cushion in the small of your back.
- Take short breaks in the journey to walk around and give your back a rest from sitting.

9.1.3  Driving
- No driving for 2 weeks.
- Between 2-6 weeks limit driving to short journeys only.

9.1.4  Walking
- Walk as much as comfortable.
- There is no limit.
- Aim for one mile a day.

9.1.5  Swimming
- After 2 weeks if your wound is well healed.

9.1.6  Return to work (Office)
- From 2-4 weeks. Sit for short periods, stand and walk around frequently.

9.1.7  Return to work (Physical)
- After 6 weeks.

9.1.7  Return to sport
- After 3 months.
APPENDIX 9.2  Spinal Decompression - Advice for Patients

The following instructions are general and may be changed by your doctor depending on your surgery.

9.2.1 Sitting

- Sit for as long as you are comfortable.
- Start with short periods e.g. for meals, and gradually increase.
- Always maintain good posture

9.2.2 The Journey Home by Car

- Sit on the passenger side, recline the seat and if necessary place a small rolled towel or cushion in the small of your back.
- Take short breaks in the journey to walk around and give your back a rest from sitting.

9.2.3 Driving

- No driving for 2 weeks.
- Between 2-6 weeks limit driving to short journeys only

9.2.4 Walking

- Walk as much as comfortable.
- There is no limit.
- Aim for one mile a day

9.2.5 Swimming

- After 2 weeks if your wound is well healed

9.2.7 Return to work (Physical)

- After 6-8 weeks