PATIENT GUIDE

After your spine surgery

Post-operative instructions
Advice from our physiotherapists



NEUROSCIENCES CENTRE
Neurosurgery and spine surgery

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Prepare well, recover well

This booklet guides you after your spine surgery at the Neurosciences Centre.

Following this advice will help you **gradually return to normal life** and take an active part in your own care.

The ward physiotherapist will also give you advice tailored to your needs.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Neurosud office
+33 4 66 04 95 70
Appointments, documents

Neurosurgery ward
+33 4 66 28 25 52
Available 24 hours a day

Occit'Perf
+33 4 66 26 55 96
Pain relief infusion at home



HOW TO FIND US

Neurosciences Centre

The Neurosciences Centre is marked on the map, next to the Carémeau Sud building at Nîmes University Hospital.

Plan your journey and parking in advance.

YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

Before your admission

YOUR SURGERY IS SCHEDULED

While you wait, keep moving and stay as active as possible, without making your pain worse.

Your results after surgery will only be better!

Plan ahead

Contact the professionals you will need: nurse, physiotherapist, ambulance or medical taxi for your return home, or your own transport if the surgeon agrees.

Prepare your return home

If needed, adapt your living space: bed height, long-handled shoehorn, shopping, help with housework…

ON THE DAY OF SURGERY

- ✓ **Bring your scans** (MRI and/or CT).
- ✓ Arrive **fasting** (nothing to eat or drink).
- ✓ Brush your teeth and take a full shower, including washing your hair.
- ✓ Wear clean, comfortable clothes and easy-to-put-on shoes that hold the heel.

⊘ **Smoking and vaping are not allowed** in the Neurosciences Centre. If you are dependent, consider nicotine patches, for example.

YOUR HOSPITAL STAY

The day of your surgery

1. Arrival at the Neurosciences Centre
2. Welcome by the nursing team
3. Settling into your room
4. Transfer to the operating theatre
5. **Surgery**
6. Recovery room
7. Return to the ward
8. **First visit from the physiotherapist** and first time out of bed
9. The nurse tells you when you may eat and drink (you must stay fasting for a while after surgery)
10. Visit from the surgeon
11. Post-operative imaging if needed
12. Discharge approved by the surgeon, the nurse and the physiotherapist

Going home

You go home by ambulance, medical taxi or your own transport, as advised by the surgeon.

If your surgeon has arranged Occit'Perf home care

The catheter placed during surgery **stays in place** for your return home. Call your home nurse **as soon as you are discharged**: they will set up the pain relief infusion at home using the equipment delivered in advance by Occit'Perf.

Occit'Perf: **+33 4 66 26 55 96**

GOOD HABITS EVERY DAY

In bed

Choose the most comfortable position while keeping your **spine straight**, lying on your back or on your side. Use a pillow that keeps your head in line with your spine.

Do not sit up in bed, **only on the edge**. To get in and out of bed, use the "log roll" technique below, without holding your breath.

Getting up: the "log roll" technique



1 Lying on your back, bend one leg, then the other.



2 Roll onto your side in one movement, keeping your back straight.



3 Lower your feet off the bed while pushing up with your hand and opposite elbow. On the ward, do not use the overhead bar.



4 To stand up, **push on your thighs with your hands**.

To lie down, follow the same steps in reverse order.

Video: getting in and out of bed

Scan the QR code or click the link

youtube.com/shorts/oboyLCQZodk

GOOD HABITS EVERY DAY

Washing and dressing



Washing

Prefer **standing up**, with your weight spread evenly on both feet.

To brush your teeth without bending forward, **use a glass** to rinse your mouth.

Dressing



For the **first 15 days**, put on trousers, socks and shoes lying on your back, to take the load off your spine.



To put on your shoes, you can also sit **upright at the back of a chair** and rest your ankle on the opposite knee.

Video: getting dressed and putting on shoes

Scan the QR code or click the link

youtube.com/shorts/VJVBKjhVwew

⚠ **Do not bend forward. Do not twist your back.**

GOOD HABITS EVERY DAY

Sitting and walking

Sitting first month

- Avoid **low, deep or soft** seats.
- Avoid sitting for long periods as much as possible.
- Sitting is allowed **for meals and to use the toilet**, as long as you keep your back straight and your knees lower than your hips.





Walking

- Start walking again **as soon as possible** after surgery.
- Once home, plan **several walks** throughout the day.
- Gradually increase the time and distance.
- Avoid standing still or shuffling around for long: it strains your back and can cause pain.

GOOD HABITS EVERY DAY

Travelling by car

You may go home in your own vehicle if the surgeon agrees.

First 10 days

Travelling by car is **strongly discouraged**, whether as a passenger or as the driver.

Up to 30 days

Use the car **for short journeys only**.

Your surgeon may give you different timings depending on your surgery.

Getting into the car



1. Set the seat back to about 110°. Stand with your back to the car and sit down, supporting yourself on your thighs.



2. Bring one leg in, then the other, without holding your breath.



3. Press your back firmly against the seat, using your arms to help.

Video: getting in and out of a car

Scan the QR code or click the link

youtube.com/shorts/1q_9LGDdiX8

GOOD HABITS EVERY DAY

Bending and carrying



Bending down

At first, when you bend down, **do not bend your back**: bend your hips and knees instead.

You can hold on to something stable (a chair, a piece of furniture) to take the strain off your back.

Video: bending down

Scan the QR code or click the link

youtube.com/shorts/_FLXFIoRXUA

Carrying

3 kg maximum for **one month**: no heavy lifting.

- If you need to carry things, **keep them close to your body**.
- Share the load between both hands whenever possible.



AFTER SURGERY

Getting back to your activities

Everyday activities

Gradually return to your everyday activities.

Staying in the same position for long periods, and moving or holding your trunk in extreme positions, **are not recommended for six weeks**.

The same activities do not suit everyone: find what works best for you and your back.

YOUR GOAL

Move gradually and steadily increase your level of activity. Do a little more each day!

You will have good days and bad days: that is normal.

Returning to work

1 to 3 months (depending on the surgery)

of sick leave at least before a normal return to work. Your GP or surgeon may extend this if needed.

Sport

8 wks discectomy

3 mths spinal fusion

A **gradual** return, with your surgeon's approval.

Regular physical activity, even moderate, helps you stay healthy.

IF YOU HAD SURGERY ON YOUR NECK

Cervical spine surgery

- Depending on your surgeon's advice, you may need to wear a **neck collar**. You will be shown how to use it on the ward.
- Avoid extreme neck positions for the first few days.
- Local pain, discomfort when swallowing and voice changes are **temporary** and may last a few days after surgery.

Remember: you play an **active role** throughout your care and your return to everyday life.

⚠ Warning signs

- Persistent fever above 39 °C (102 °F)
- Worrying pain that you did not have before surgery
- Difficulty holding or controlling your urine
- Numbness around the anus and genitals
- Numbness, itching or unusual weakness in the legs
- Unusual loss of balance
- Swelling or discharge from the wound

Do not wait: call us promptly

Neurosurgery ward, 24/7	Occit'Perf	or
+33 4 66 28 25 52	**+33 4 66 26 55 96**	**Your GP**

APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

Your recovery, step by step

Your surgeon may change these timings if needed.

Video: herniated disc surgery
Scan the QR code or click the link
youtu.be/x7NF03b6IoM



Day 0 → 15 Limit prolonged sitting

Day 0 → 30 Avoid repeated bending and twisting of the back

Return to work

1 to 3 months depending on surgery

Day 30 — Day 90