



AT HOME WITH YOUR ASPEN CERVICAL COLLAR

A cervical collar provides support and restricts movement in your neck while bones and tissues heal in the area where you had surgery.

The Aspen collar is plastic with front and back panels lined with removable padding. It provides comfort and keeps sweat away from your skin. Openings on the front and the back panel of the collar allow your skin to breathe.

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO WEAR THE ASPEN COLLAR?

Your surgeon will tell you how long you should wear the collar. You will likely have a follow-up appointment with your doctor in two to four weeks and he/she will let you know how much longer you need to wear your collar.

MAY I TAKE THE COLLAR OFF AND PUT IT ON BY MYSELF?

Yes—you may take the collar off to change the pads while you are standing or sitting in front of a mirror. If a family member will be available daily or every other day, the occupational therapist can train your family member to help you with changing the collar pads.

REMOVING THE COLLAR/CHANGING PADS:

1. Position yourself in front of a mirror (seated or standing).
2. Unfasten one side of the collar straps.
3. Remove the collar with the other side still attached by the collar strap.
4. Next, undo the other strap on the collar to separate the front and back panel of the collar.
5. Hold the back panel at arm's length directly in front of you (at eye level, looking straight ahead and keeping your neck in a neutral position) and remove the dirty gray pad. Replace it with the clean pad, weaving the straps through the padding and plastic.
6. Remove the top (chin) pad of the front panel and replace it with the clean pad. Finally, remove the bottom (chest) piece and replace with a clean pad.

TO REAPPLY THE COLLAR:

1. Reattach the front and back panels on one side using the collar strap.
2. Bring the front panel of the collar to your neck and place it under your chin. Make sure to keep your neck in a neutral position (looking straight ahead).
3. Bring the back panel around your neck and secure the strap on the other side of the collar.
4. Pull the strap securely on each side, making sure the collar fits snugly and securely. Your head should feel supported and the straps should be pulled evenly.

TO CLEAN THE PADS:

Use gentle soap and water to hand wash the foam pads in the sink. Rinse and leave on a towel to dry. (Pads will dry overnight.) Replace the pads every day or two, as needed. Do not wash the pads in the washer or dry them in the dryer—this will ruin them! You will be discharged from the hospital with one extra set of pads.

TO BATHE:

On the day of discharge, your nurse or doctor will tell you when you can shower. He/she will also let you know if you can remove your collar while in the shower.

TO DRESS:

Wear button-up shirts, shirts with wide necks, or V-necks.

WHEN EATING:

Tuck a cloth or napkin between your chin and the collar to keep the collar from getting dirty.

DRIVING:

Do not drive until your doctor says it's okay.

REMEMBER:

- Keep your skin clean and dry.
- You should not be able to move your head from side to side or up and down in the collar.
- Avoid quick movements.
- Do not lift more than 5-10 pounds or do activities that require your arms to be over your head for long periods of time.
- A desktop computer is better for your neck than using a laptop because the screen is at eye level.