

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some questions that you may want to ask me at your consultation.

This list of questions is not exclusive to spinal surgery but applies to anybody undergoing any type of procedure.

1. What type of surgery are you recommending? Why?
2. What is the source of the pain that is being addressed?
3. What are my non-surgical options?
4. What is the natural course of my condition if it is not surgically addressed?
5. What would you recommend if this were your friend/wife/sister/daughter etc.?
6. How long will the surgery take?
7. What are the potential side effects, risks and complications?
8. Please explain the risks and how they relate to me personally. What if you get in there and you see something different than you expected?
9. Do I need to donate my own blood?
10. Do you perform the whole procedure?
11. Who else will assist you in the operation?
12. What are the long-term consequences of the proposed procedure? E.g. will the operation ever need to be re-done? If it is a fusion, will it lead to degeneration at other levels of the spine?)
13. How many times have you done this procedure?
14. Are you fellowship-trained in spine surgery?
15. If I want to get a second opinion, who would you recommend?
16. Statistically the success rate for this type of surgery is X%. What is your personal success rate and how many times have you performed this type of surgery?
17. Can I talk to other patients who have had a similar procedure?
18. What kind of pain should I expect after the surgery and for how long?
19. How long is the hospital stay?
20. May a family member spend the night with me in the hospital?
21. How do you manage the pain in the hospital?
22. Which pain medications will I be sent home with? What are possible side effects of these prescriptions? E.g. constipation, drowsiness etc.
23. Will you know before the surgery if I will need a back brace afterwards? If so, will I be fitted for one before the surgery?
24. Who can I call if I have questions after the surgery? What is the process for communication?
25. How often will I see you after my surgery?
26. What symptoms would warrant a call to your office?
27. What symptoms would warrant immediate medical attention?
28. What limitations will I have after surgery and for how long?
29. How long will I be out of work/school?
30. What kind of help will I need when I return home?
31. When can I drive again?
32. When can I resume normal (light) household chores?
33. What expectations do you have for my recovery?
34. When is it safe for me to have sex again?

35. How soon after the surgery can I start physical therapy?