A laminoplasty is a procedure that is done to take pressure off the spinal cord. If you need surgery in your neck, or cervical spine, you will have an incision from the back of your neck about six inches long. The neurosurgeon lifts the bones up off your spinal cord. Titanium mini-plates and bone grafts are then used to secure the bone after it is lifted up.

Preparing and Planning for your Surgery
Please refer to your “Having Surgery at UW Hospital” book for general instructions.

Constipation
Please begin taking a stool softener two days before surgery. Take docusate with senna with at least 8 ounces of water. This will prevent constipation caused by pain medicine. Do not take any fiber or stool softener on the morning of surgery.

Urination
If you are having any trouble with urination, please let your surgeon or the advanced practice provider who is caring for you know. They may want to start a medication to help with urination before surgery.

Recovery at Home
People who have this surgery are often ready to discharge after 1-2 nights in the hospital. You will need to plan ahead to have a friend or family member available to be with you at least the first 24-28 hours after discharge. If you live alone, and don’t have anyone to help, you may need to discharge for rehabilitation at a skilled nursing facility after discharge.

What to Expect after Surgery
Pain
You can expect to have some muscular neck pain. Prior to surgery, you will be given medicines to help prevent pain after surgery. After surgery, your pain will be managed with oral medicines designed to target different sources of your pain. You neck pain will improve. As your pain lessens, you will need less medicine for the pain. All pain pills should be taken with food and at least 8 ounces of water. Do not take any non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines for six (6) weeks. Taking these will slow the healing process. Examples: ibuprofen and Naprosyn.

Check with your doctor before taking any of these medicines. You should never start a new drug even those you can buy over-the-counter, without talking with your doctor or pharmacist.

Activity
Do not life more than 10 pounds (about 1 gallon of milk) until you are told that you may lift more weight. Be conscious of how much things weigh.
No pushing or pulling
No strenuous activity
Walking is good. Slowly increase the amount of walking you do.

Cervical Collar
You may need to wear a collar after surgery. If your doctor orders a collar:
- You will be sent home with one collar that has an extra set of pads.
- You must wear your collar even during a shower or while bathing.
- The collar will fit snugly, but comfortably, around your neck. This prevents you from bending your chin to your chest and from turning your head side to side.

Driving
Do not drive until after your follow up appointment. You cannot drive while taking narcotic pain pills. If you are wearing a collar, you may drive when you no longer wear the collar and can move your head so you can drive safely.

Work
Talk with your doctor about when you may return to. Most often, you will be off 2 – 8 weeks. This depends upon the nature of the work that you do.

What to Do for Constipation
When you are ready to go home, take docusate with senna twice a day while you are taking narcotic pain pills. If you do not have a bowel movement within two days or beyond your normal routine, take Milk of Magnesia® (6 teaspoons two to three times a day) until you have a bowel movement. You may eat prunes or drink prune juice instead of taking Milk of Magnesia®. Be sure to drink several 8-ounce glasses of water or juice daily so that your body has enough fluids.

Sexual Activity
After two weeks, you may resume your sex life as soon as you feel comfortable to do so.

Wound Care
You may shower within three days. Please wear the collar while you shower until you are told that it is no longer needed. Keep your incision clean and dry. When you are in the shower, cover it with plastic wrap taped over it for the first 5 days. After bathing, gently pat dry with a clean towel. Please have your care provider clean the incision daily with mild soap and water. Keep your incision lightly covered with gauze to protect it from rubbing on your collar. If you have stitches, they will be left in place for about 2 to 3 weeks. If you have dissolvable sutures, your return to clinic will be in about 4 weeks.

Avoid being exposed to the sun. Do not use tanning beds.

Call your Doctor If You Notice Any Signs of Infection
- Increased redness, swelling, or any drainage
- Increased pain that does not go away with medicine
- Fever greater than 100°F (oral) for two readings taken 4 hours apart

Phone Numbers

Please call the Neurosurgery Clinic at 608-263-7502, Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, with any questions. After hours, the answering service will assist you.

If you live out of the area, call 1-800-323-8942.