
THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Your Guide to Recovering from Spine Surgery



ONLY THE BEST FOR OUR PATIENTS

It is a true pleasure for me to be a part of Colorado Advanced Orthopedics at Pioneers Medical Center.

I am confident that you will be beyond impressed by the high quality of care you receive at Pioneers at every step of the way. We utilize a comprehensive team-based approach in helping you with your spine problems. Conservative care and techniques are emphasized through various treatment options, such as steroid injections, ultra-sounded guided therapies, physical therapy, weight loss, and guided exercise as the mainstay of your initial treatment.

There are certain conditions of the spine that may not improve with non-surgical care, or which may require more urgent surgical intervention. In such cases, my role as the spine surgeon is to manage your problem with as little “collateral damage” as possible.



◀ **Dr. J. Alex Sielatycki, M.D.**

Dr. J. Alex Sielatycki is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon specializing in spine surgery, spinal motion preservation, cervical disc replacement, and lumbar disc replacement. When not in the operating room, Dr. Sielatycki enjoys spending time outside with his family, hiking, skiing, and good food.

This means that my surgical approach is always to offer the least invasive option, while still correcting the underlying problem. When it comes to spine surgery, my philosophy is to maximize your recovery and physical function by avoiding fusion whenever possible. I will always seek ways to avoid fusion of your spine. In the neck, we are able to offer cervical disc replacement for the vast majority of the patients we see. This option allows us to remove the pressure from your nerves and spinal cord, and reconstruct the segment with a motion-preserving prosthetic disc. This allows you to maintain any active lifestyle that you choose.

In the lumbar spine, we focus on non-fusion techniques such as minimally invasive “microsurgical” decompression of the nerves. My job as a spine surgeon, and our job as a spine team, is to get you back to the activities that you enjoy. At Colorado Advanced Orthopedics we consider your spine health our highest priority, and will work both with you and for you to get you moving.

Dr. J. Alex Sielatychi

How to Prepare for Your Surgery



Flat Tops Wilderness

With more than 110 lakes and ponds to explore, the Flat Tops covers a whopping 35,214 acres of land. Enjoy the clean air, fresh water, and traverse over 160 miles of trails as you venture into the woods.

Preparing for your spine surgery involves preparation beyond being ready the day of. Preparations include readying your home, medication adjustments, taking vitamins, and cleaning the area of your surgery.

Preparing Your Home

After spine surgery, you will be limited in what you are able to do for around 6 weeks (restrictions discussed later on). Because of these restrictions, you are going to want to prepare your house to be easier for you to maneuver around after surgery. This should include: moving any objects from the floor that you could trip and fall over and moving heavy objects to counter height, such as dog food bags (and so on) to prevent bending, lifting and twisting.

Other Preparations Prior to Surgery

Be sure to arrange for transportation home after your hospitalization. Not being able to drive after surgery is common after spine surgeries.


Stocking up on extra groceries, especially planning healthy and easily prepared meals will reduce activity and exertion after your surgery. One recommendation is to meal prep by freezing meals that can be easily reheated. Arrange help with other daily activities such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry as well. If your concerned with safely getting around after surgery, please make arrangements to obtain a walker or a cane. For lumbar surgeries, please arrange to bring a walker to your surgery and to use after. You will not be able to lift objects heavier than 15 pounds, so arranging assistance lifting those objects when needed is advised.


Begin Taking Over-the-Counter Vitamins

Begin taking over the counter vitamins. These will help with reducing infection post operatively, and will help your fusion (if you are getting a fusion) solidify.

These include:

 **Vitamin D**
3,000 – 5,000 IU's Daily

 **Vitamin C**
1,000 mg Twice Daily

 **Calcium**
1,000 mg Twice Daily

Stop Taking Certain Prescription Medications

Below is a list of medications you should discontinue prior to surgery, and when you should discontinue them. Most of these medications are blood thinners, so we have you discontinue them to reduce your risk of increased bleeding during surgery. Please inform your surgery team if you are taking any of the below medications, along with discussing the timeline to discontinue them:

Medications to Stop Two Weeks Prior to Surgery

Herbals and supplements: garlic, ginko, ginseng, fish oil, flaxseed oil,

saw palmetto, chamomile, green tea, vitamin K & E. Do not stop the intake of vitamins C and D, as well as calcium, if those are already in your routine.

Immunomodulators: methotrexate, plaquenil, Enbrel, remicade, humira, cellcept. These increase your risk of infection.

Medications to Stop Seven Days Prior to Surgery

NSAIDs: aspirin, diclofenac, ibuprofen, celecoxib, naproxen, indomethacin, ketorolac, etedolac, sulinac.

Platelet inhibitors: clopidogrel/Plavix, prasugrel, ticagrelor, ticlopidine.
Warfarin: Coumadin.

Medications to Stop 48 Hours Prior to Surgery

Direct oral anticoagulants: dabigatran, rivaroxaban/xarelto, apixaban, edoxaban.

Medications to Stop 24 Hours Prior to Surgery

Lovenox.



Clean Your Skin to Prevent Infection

Prior to your surgery, you will need to wash the area of your surgery with an antibacterial and antimicrobial soap called 'Hibiclens.' Using the soap aids in preventing postoperative infection around the surgical area.

Washing with Hibiclens

1. Begin using the antiseptic soap three days before your surgery.
2. You will shower as normal, once you have finished your routine, before you shut off the water, please use a **new** sponge and around 1/3 of the bottle.
3. GENTLY scrub your entire area of operation.
4. For lumbar fusions, start from below your belt line, to your upper

back as best as you can reach, or ask for assistance from a family member.

5. For cervical fusions, GENTLY scrub your entire neck, chest, and upper back.
6. You will repeat this for three days until your surgery.

When to Begin Washing with Hibiclens

Your surgery date is:

Please begin your scrub on
Monday _____
and repeat on the _____,
and the _____.

The Day of Surgery



Devil's Causeway

At the peak of the Flat Tops above Trapper's Lake, Devil's Causeway provides unparalleled views of the wilderness along with a challenging hike. At only four feet wide at some spots, the trail is extremely rewarding for those that dare take on the challenge.

On your surgery day, please be sure to arrive at your scheduled check-in time and that your at-home preparations and transportation are ready to go. Be sure to bring comfortable clothes and other necessities that you may need.

Reminders

It is important to follow instructions given to you regarding food and drink intake prior to your surgery. Avoid wearing deodorants, perfumes, powders, makeup ...

The Admission Process

You will be admitted to the hospital a few hours prior to your surgery. During this time you will be prepared for surgery and have the opportunity to speak to your registered nurse, anesthesia provider and your surgeon.

Anesthesia

Anesthesia is the process of inducing a pain-free, tranquil, sleep-like state for your surgery. Your anesthesia

provider has several options to carry you comfortably through surgery without pain.

Some medical conditions may make one option more preferable. Whichever technique is chosen, you can be assured that your operating room experience will be comfortable and painless.

After Your Surgery



Trappers Lake

At the heart of the "Cradle of the Wilderness," Trappers Lake offers pristine fishing and recreation, and a shore-side restaurant and lodge provides excellent dining and relaxation opportunities.

After your surgery, you will likely spend a night at our facility to reduce the risk of complications once you are able to go home. During this time, we will conduct initial physical and occupational therapy.

Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU)

You will be brought immediately following surgery to the PACU where a registered nurse will monitor you one on one to make certain you are stable and your pain is under control. You may be in PACU from 30 minutes, or up to 2 hours. Your family may not be able to see you until after you leave this area.

Physical and Occupational Therapy

Typically, you will have a one night stay in the hospital. During your hospital stay, you will receive physical and occupational therapy services to optimize your independence and safety prior to your discharge. The physical therapist and occupational therapists will participate in your

discharge planning to determine what equipment and level of assistance you will need in order to return home safely. You may qualify for extended rehabilitation, either hospital based or off-site, under your insurance plan if a longer stay becomes necessary. Your hospital team will coordinate this with you and your family.

How Physical Therapy Will Help

Physical therapy will assist you in learning how to properly transfer in and out of bed, walk with an assistive device, and ambulation without a assistive device. Physical therapy will continually assess your strength and provide you with techniques to function safely and effectively at home.

Physical therapy will teach you appropriate exercises to begin your rehabilitation.

How Occupational Therapy Will Help

Occupational therapy will assess your ability to complete your basic activities of daily living (ADL's).

Occupational therapy will assist you in determining what adaptive equipment and strategies are needed to complete dressing, grooming, showering, and toilet tasks until you have regained full function.

Occupational therapy will work with you once or twice a day until ADL goals are met in the hospital.

Physical Activity

Physical activity will be part of your daily activities. It is imperative that you walk EVERY DAY, and we ask that you aim to walk a mile accumulatively. This means you do not have to walk a mile all at once. By your two week appointment, we will ask that you are walking upwards of two miles a day. People who walk everyday tend to have better outcomes from their surgery, so it is very important to walk.

Incision care

Please remember, If you notice any increased or a change in drainage out of your incision, redness or swelling around the incision, or if you have a

fever of 100.4 or greater, please call the orthopedic office immediately. If you are unable to get a hold of someone, go to the emergency room.

Your surgical incision will be closed with dissolvable sutures and steri-strips. On rare occasions you will have non-dissolvable sutures. If this is the case, you will be sent home with instructions and a follow up appointment to remove them 14 days after surgery.

If you go home with a drain, specific instructions will be given to you on when and how to remove it. Before you leave the hospital, your dressing will be changed to a waterproof dressing. You may shower as normal and get this dressing wet. But please don't scrub at it, and if you notice the dressing isn't sealed and water gets inside, contact your orthopedic office for instructions.

On the fourth day after your surgery, you may remove this waterproof bandage, but please leave the steri-strips in place. These will fall off on their own, or at your 2 week post op appointment they will be removed by the orthopedic staff.



You can shower as normal once the waterproof bandage has been removed, but do not scrub or pick at your incision. Pat the incision dry. Don't apply ointment or lotions to the incision while it is healing.

Postoperative medications

It is important to note that these medications could change at your discharge, pending what your hospital team determines is the best medication for you. These medications help with postoperative pain including incision pain, and pain that will go down your legs from nerves being irritated.

For pain and swelling, you should take the following medications in this order: For inflammation, anti-inflammatories: Prednisone, if you are not diabetic. The day after you finish prednisone you will start meloxicam. For nerve pain, generally pain that goes down the legs, you'll receive neuroleptics. You will be prescribed either gabapentin, lyrica, or other medication for nerve pain. For muscle spasms or cramps, this can be similar to nerve pain, so try the neuroleptics before taking the muscle relaxers. For daytime relief, tizanidine but is taken only as needed. For nighttime

relief, is taken as needed and will only be prescribed for the first 7 days.

For pain management that has not been alleviated with the above medication: Acetaminophen (tylenol) or Oxycodone. If you are a smoker, diabetic, or have prediabetes and you are undergoing a fusion, you will receive an antibiotic to be taken as directed at discharge. Managing your pain postoperatively is very important to us. At the hospital, the RN's will work diligently to make your pain tolerable.

When you go home, it is important that you understand how to manage your pain. With spine surgery, the goal should not be to completely alleviate your pain, but to make your pain tolerable allowing you to move around normally.

Spine surgery is a major procedure; pain is to be expected during the recovery process. Studies show that if your pain is at a perceived "4" or higher, you may find it difficult to carry out your ADL's, so aim to keep your pain at or below that level. It is important to discuss open and honestly with your Spine team about your pain and how you are hoping to manage it.

By six weeks after your surgery, we will no longer prescribe narcotics. By this time your pain should be managed and you should be walking regularly.

Please allow three business days notice if you are running low on narcotics to our office for a refill.

Restrictions After Your Surgery



Rifle Falls

Just north of Meeker, Rifle Falls State Park offers stunning and accessible views, hiking, and camping opportunities. It's the perfect place to have a picnic or scratch your spelunking itch.

Your recovery time will vary depending on your specific surgery and from person to person, but our primary goal is to ensure that you are back to your routine as quickly and safely as possible.

Depending on the type of surgery you under go, you should expect at least 6 weeks of restrictions on your movement. These restrictions include: No bending, twisting, or lifting greater than 15lbs.

If you have undergone a lumbar or cervical spinal fusion, you can expect these restrictions to be present until 12 weeks. This does not mean you won't bend, twist, or lift for 3 months. You should expect at 6 weeks to begin removing these restrictions slowly with the help of a physical therapist. If you have undergone a microdiscectomy, a laminectomy, or a cervical disc replacement, then you can expect to have these restrictions lifted at 6 weeks. We will still

encourage you to work with a physical therapist to gain full strength and function.

Returning to work

If you are wanting to return to work, it's recommended you give yourself at least 2 weeks off from surgery for adequate healing time.

After this, as long as your job falls within the limit on restrictions, and you are weaning/weaned off the narcotics, you can consider going back to work. It would be beneficial to plan going in for a short period of time and increasing your time as you heal.

As long as you are not in a hard neck collar (from posterior cervical fusion)

and are not on the oxycodone and valium, you can return to driving at your comfort level.

Expectations

Healing from spine surgery is a time consuming process, and it is important to understand the healing process.

Generally, you should see a steady increase in your progress, in which you have more good days than bad days. Progressively your strength should increase, and your pain should decrease. This has better outcomes the more you walk.

At 12 weeks, you should have regained a lot of your strength, and sensation should start to feel normal.

By 1 year post op, what recovery you are going to experience in your strength and numbness/tingling will be at its maximum. If you are still having issues, before or at this point, do not hesitate to reach out to your spine team with questions or concerns about your progress.

Follow-ups

You will have three follow up appointments after your spine surgery, these are important to show up to, as they will assure you are properly healing.

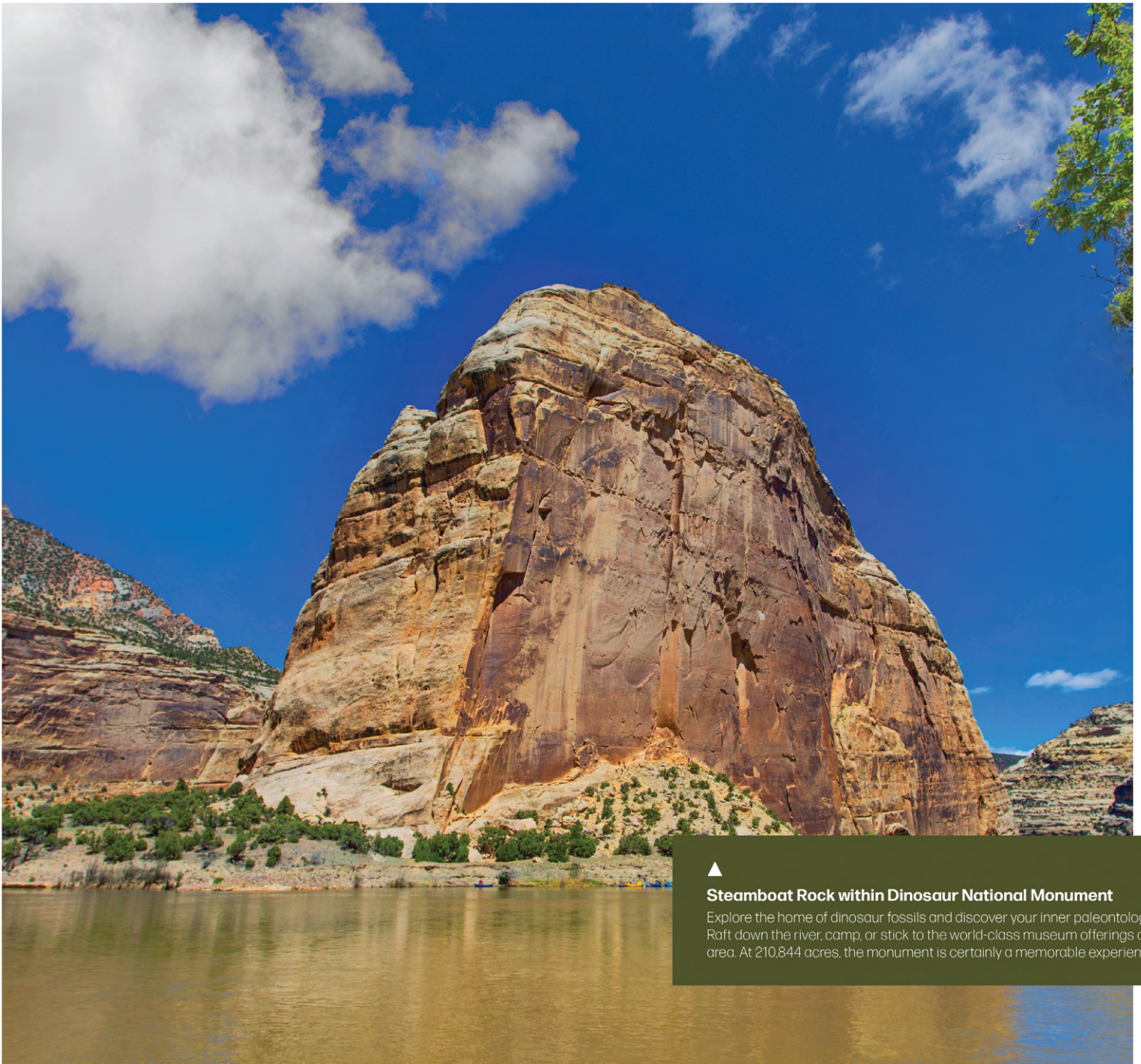
Your first appointment will be at 2-3 weeks post op. At this appointment we will inspect your incision, remove any steri-strips, see how you are doing with your medications, and discuss weaning off the narcotics.

Your second appointment will be at 6-7 weeks post op. At this appointment, we will discuss how to wean off all of your medications. We will also ask where you would like to go to physical therapy, and how to start removing your restrictions.

Your third, and last appointment (only for fusions, or if otherwise designated), will be at 12-13 weeks post op. At this appointment, we will snap x-rays beforehand to assure your fusion has solidified, and do a basic neuromuscular exam. After this appointment, you will be fully cleared and only have to return if you have further questions, or have any other problems you would like to discuss with our team.

If you feel the need to be seen between any of these appointments, or have questions that need to be answered quickly, please do not hesitate to call our office, we would be happy to help you and schedule to be seen at any point in time.

Your Spine Surgery Team



Steamboat Rock within Dinosaur National Monument

Explore the home of dinosaur fossils and discover your inner paleontologist. Raft down the river, camp, or stick to the world-class museum offerings of the area. At 210,844 acres, the monument is certainly a memorable experience.

Colorado Advanced Orthopedics Sports Medicine and Spine Center is pleased that you and your provider have chosen us to conduct your spine surgery. We are a team focused on consistently providing excellent care and we work together to assure your success both before and after your procedure.

Here are the following members of our team and their contact numbers:

- Orthopedic Clinic: 970-878-9752
- Certified Athletic Trainer: 970-878-9153
- Sports Medicine Medical Assistant: 970-878-9376
- Orthopedic Clinic Supervisor: 970-878-9382
- Hospital Surgical Department: 970-878-9311
- Anesthesia Providers: 970-878-9740
- Hospital Nursing: 970-878-9292
- Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy: 970-878-9298
- Lab: 970-878-9279
- Diagnostic Imaging: 970-878-9269
- Discharge Planning: 970-878-6124
- Surgical Authorization Specialist: 970-878-9316
- Pioneers Medical Center Main Line: 970-878-5047

Weekend and after hours number for our physicians will be provided at your appointment. Please only call 911 or go to the emergency room if you have been instructed by our providers or in the event of a life-threatening emergency. For non-emergency care, please contact our office to avoid complications.

About Meeker

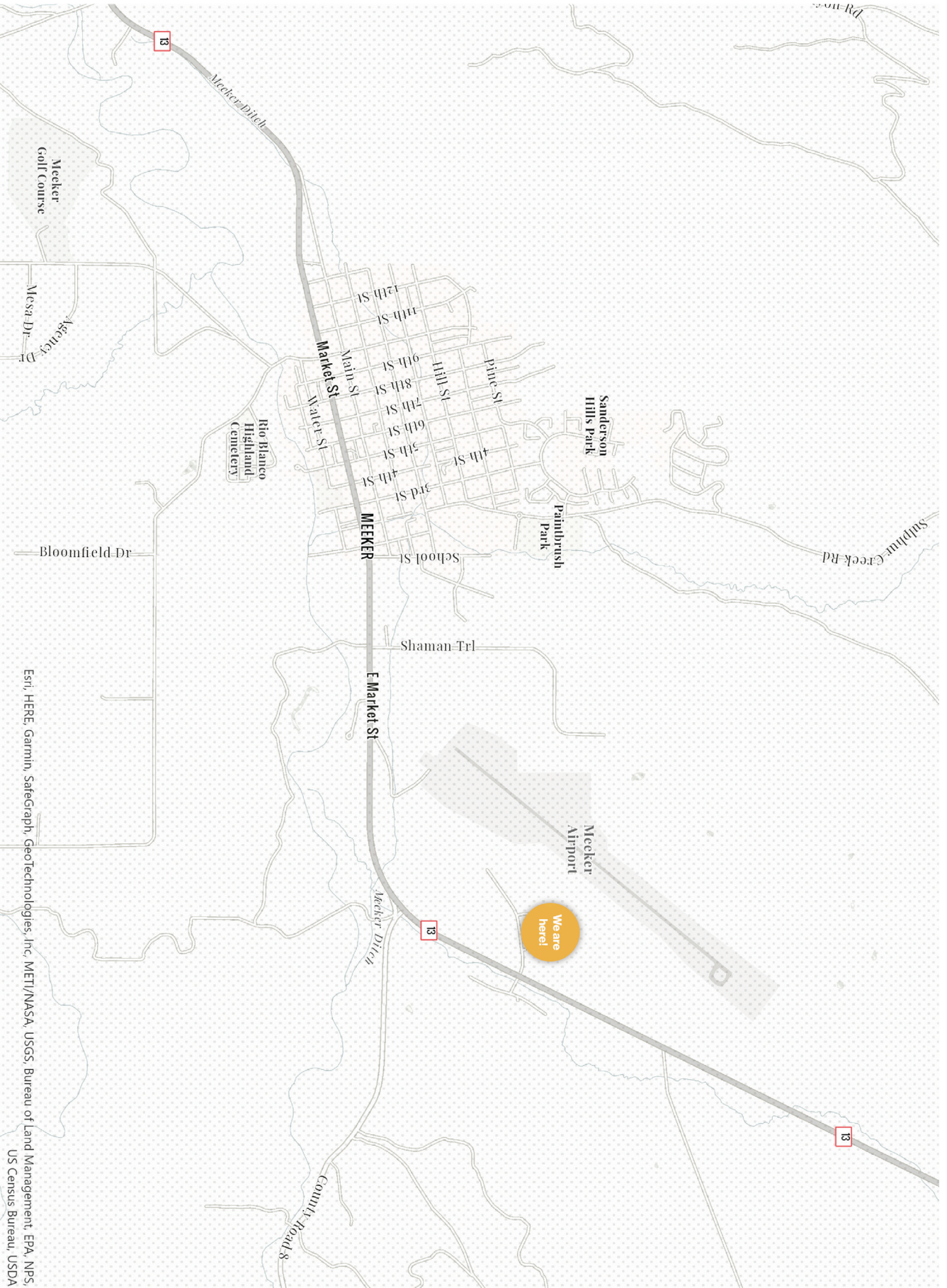
Meeker is a small mountain town located on the famous White River just below the Flat Tops Wilderness Area. Positioned in the Northwestern Corner of Colorado, Meeker offers access to an extensive amount of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, State of Colorado, and Federal Forest Service. Meeker's public land gives rise to unparalleled hiking, biking, snowmobiling, and motorized vehicle trails.



Endless fishing, hunting, and camping along with fun in sun at Meeker's streams, lakes, reservoirs and the White River, are what distinguish this small town as such a desirable destination. Events like Meeker Range Call, the Sheep Dog Trials Championship, Skijoring, Summer Rodeo Series, and the Rineheart Archery Tour ensure year round

entertainment for all ages. We're just a short drive away from larger communities, including Grand Junction, Glenwood, and Steamboat Springs, that offer big city amenities, world class-skiing, charming shops, excellent food scenes, and much more.

ABOUT MEEKER



Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, Geotechnologies, Inc. METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Patient Medication Record

Patient Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Allergies: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Medication Name	Dosage	How taken?	How often?	When did you start taking?

Pre-Surgery Checklist

Your surgery is scheduled for:

- Please see your primary care doctor by: _____
- If you see a specialist, please see them by: _____
- If you are a smoker, please quit by: _____
- Once you have set up an appointment with your primary care provider, please notify our office in order to schedule your pre-operative appointment with our providers.

Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns regarding your appointments, procedure, or preparations for your surgery.



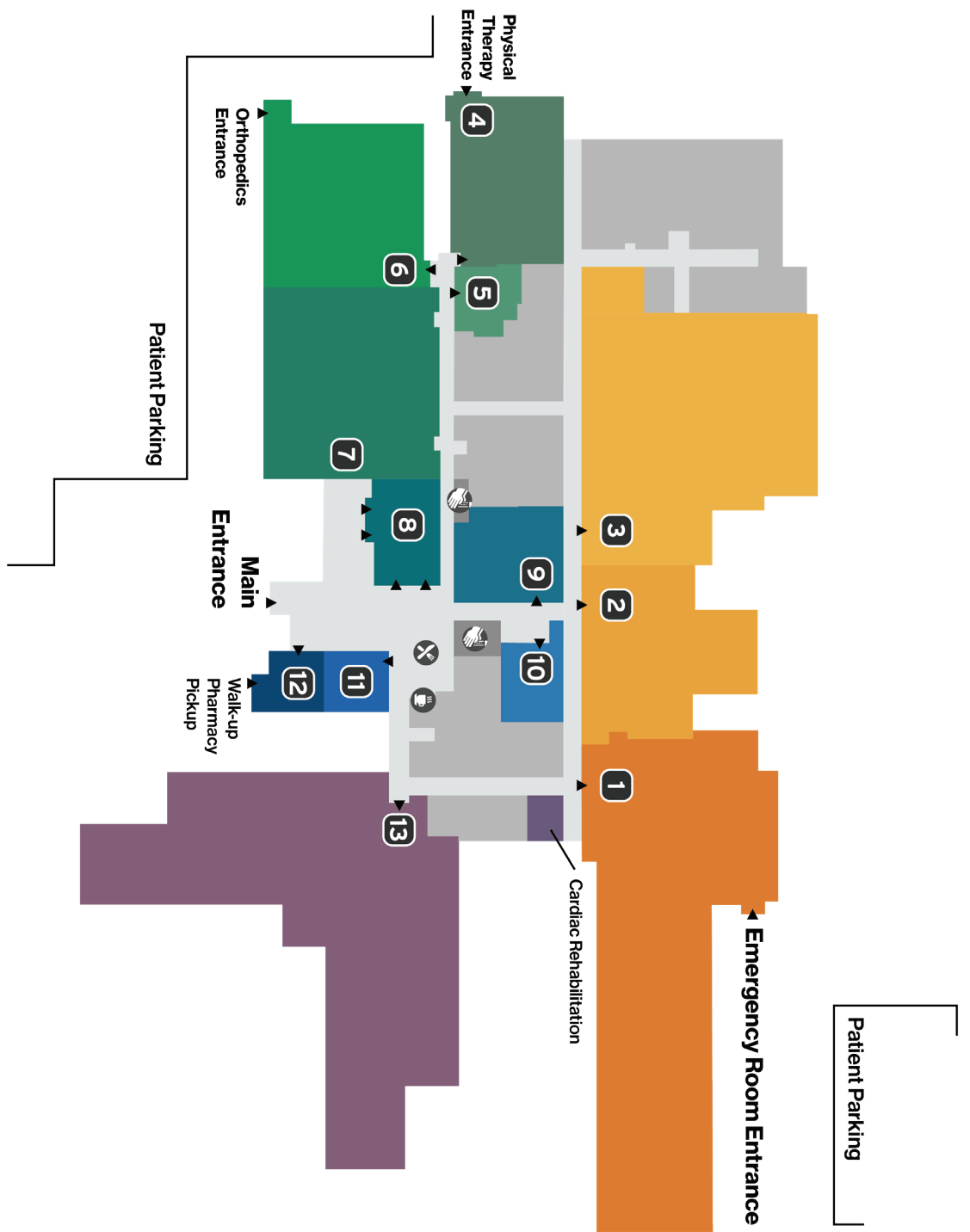
Facility Map

MAPKEY

- 1. Emergency Department & Acute Care
- 2. Radiology & Imaging
- 3. Surgical Services
- 4. Physical Therapy
- 5. Sleep Center
- 6. Colorado Advanced Orthopedics
- 7. Meeker Family Health Center
- 8. Registration, Financial Services, and HIM/Medical Records
- 9. Laboratory
- 10. Cardiopulmonary Services
- 11. Conference Room
- 12. Retail Pharmacy
- 13. Walbridge Wing

- Restrooms
- Cafeteria
- Coffee Bar

100 Pioneers Medical Center Drive
 Meeker, CO 81641
 (970) 878-5047



Connectivity
 Internet access is available for our patients and visitors.

Accessibility
 Our facility is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment.

Smoke-free Environment
 For the safety of our patients, smoking is prohibited within 50 feet of the building.



**COLORADO
ADVANCED
ORTHOPEDICS**

SPORTS MEDICINE & SPINE

PIONEERS MEDICAL CENTER

About Pioneers Medical Center

Pioneers Medical Center is recognized as one of the top 27 hospitals in the West by Becker's Hospital Review for patient experience.

Located in the beautiful intersection between the sandy deserts of Dinosaur, CO and the dense forests of the White River National Forest, Pioneers Medical Center is a community-based healthcare facility dedicated to offering a wide range of competitive and strategic benefits that support all aspects of life and wellbeing in Western Colorado. We focus on building lifelong partnerships with our patients and empower them to achieve optimal health.



**Pioneers Medical Center
100 Pioneers Medical Center Drive
Meeker, CO 81641**

**See us in the
Colorado Sun!**

