

THYROIDECTOMY

PARTIAL OR FULL REMOVAL OF THE THYROID GLAND

REMEMBER TO FOLLOW ALL GUIDELINES THAT WERE PROVIDED TO YOU BY THE SURGERY CENTER OR HOSPITAL ABOUT WHAT TIME YOU SHOULD STOP EATING AND DRINKING.

On the day of surgery, please report to the Surgery Center or Hospital on time for your scheduled procedure.

1. Thyroid surgery involves part or all of your thyroid gland. You may require thyroid hormone medications after surgery and they may need to be taken for the rest of your life. Your doctor may advise having blood tests done to determine the need for medications and to determine the dosage. You should follow up with your primary care physician or endocrinologist 6 weeks after surgery.
2. Neck pain and stiffness are not unusual following thyroid surgery. Trying to move your neck regularly (side to side and up and down) will improve these symptoms.
3. The front of the neck may remain swollen and stiff for several months. If you feel that the swelling is increasing or spreading, please call the office. An ice pack can be used if it can be tolerated.
4. Infection is rare following thyroid surgery. If your incision site feels hot to the touch, has an odor or increased drainage, or you develop a fever, it could be a sign of infection. Call the office if your temperature measures over 101.5 while taking Tylenol.
5. Avoid aspirin after surgery but also for one week prior to surgery if possible. Tylenol, Motrin and related products are acceptable. If you are on a prescribed blood thinner, stopping and restarting these medications should be discussed with your prescribing doctor (Cardiologist, PCP, etc.).
6. Keep the dressing dry. The exception to this is if glue is used for closure. If glue is used, it can get wet but it should not be rubbed, only pat dry.
7. Hoarseness is also common following thyroid surgery. This may return to normal over a few days to a few weeks. If hoarseness persists, your doctor will re-examine your vocal cords to look for weakness.
8. In most cases, your incision can/will be closed with glue. If glue is used, no care is necessary, if not, you will have sutures that are covered with a gauze or bandaged dressing. If the dressing comes off:
 - Clean the site gently with hydrogen peroxide twice daily.
 - Apply a light coating of antibiotic ointment like Bacitracin and cover it with a bandaid.
9. It may take up to 6 months for skin color to normalize. Sunscreen with SPF15 should be used when the site is exposed to sunlight to prevent discoloration and darker scarring of your incision. Once the site is completely healed, Vitamin E or OTC scar creams can be used to decrease scarring.
10. Please call the office if you have any bleeding, excessive swelling, numbness or tingling of the hands or feet, or any other unusual symptoms. Numbness and/or tingling can be a sign of low calcium. This can be confirmed with a simple lab draw and corrected simply but can be serious so should be addressed as soon as possible.
11. All patients should plan to be out of work or school for the first week after surgery but most can return for the second week but with activity restrictions. This can be discussed further with your surgeon.
12. You will have a postoperative appointment scheduled for you, which will be 7-14 days after surgery. You should have received a card with this appointment location, date and time- if you did not, please call the office to find out when this appointment is.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE.

