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Instructions following Thyroidectomy or Partial Thyroidectomy

Thyroidectomy is the surgical removal of all or part of your thyroid gland. Your thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located at the base of your neck. It produces hormones that control every aspect of your metabolism, from your heart rate to how quickly you burn calories.

Thyroidectomy is used to treat thyroid disorders, such as cancer noncancerous enlargement of the thyroid (goiter) and overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism).

How much of your thyroid gland is removed during thyroidectomy depends on the reason for surgery. If you need only part of your thyroid removed (partial thyroidectomy), your thyroid may work normally after surgery. If your entire thyroid is removed (total thyroidectomy), you need daily treatment with thyroid hormone to replace your thyroid's natural function.

Diet:

- Although there are no dietary restrictions after surgery, a soft diet may feel better for the first day. Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. You may experience nausea after anesthesia but you can advance to a regular diet as tolerated.

Pain:

- Take pain medication as prescribed by your surgeon. **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN OR NSAIDS** (i.e. Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Naprosyn), **AS THESE INCREASE THE RISK OF BLEEDING AND BRUISING**. Codeine (or other opiates) may cause nausea, vomiting, and constipation. If so, many patients will use regular acetaminophen (Tylenol) for relief.

You may use an over-the-counter stool softener if necessary.

- During the first post-operative week, patients may experience a sore throat and discomfort when swallowing. This is quite normal and may fluctuate, and pain may get worse (two three days after surgery) before it gets better. Progressive recovery can be expected in 7 - 10 days. You may use over-the-counter throat lozenges if necessary.

Activity:

- Allow sufficient time to recuperate and increase activities as tolerated during the first post-operative week. Patients are encouraged to get out of bed and walk around the night of their surgery. **Avoid any heavy lifting or strenuous activity for one week after surgery. It is not unusual to miss a week of work, and, if you have a physically demanding job, you may not return to work for two weeks.** • Consider sleeping with your head elevated for the first two to three days after surgery. This can help to decrease the swelling around the incision and make you feel more comfortable.

Incision Care:

- There may be a drain placed in your neck after surgery. The surgical nurses will instruct you on the care of that drain. The doctor will usually have you come back to the office the following day for the drain to be removed.
- Keep your incision dry for two days after surgery. You can hold a dry towel over the incision while showering, and if the wound gets wet, it should be patted dry. Do not put any creams or medications on the wound until instructed to by your surgeon. It does not need to be cleaned. Numbness around the incision is normal and usually resolves over time. We usually recommend the liberal use of sunscreen on the incision for at least 6 months after surgery.

*****Your physician will send 2 prescriptions in for after surgery. One will be an antibiotic and one will be pain medicine. Please pick these prescriptions up at your pharmacy BEFORE your scheduled surgery.**

Follow-up appointment:

- Your follow up appointment in the office will be 1 day, for drain removal and 1 week following your surgery. This visit should be scheduled prior to your surgery (at the time of your pre-operative visit). If you do not have the appointment made, please contact our office when you arrive home from the surgery center. This is important so that we may evaluate your progress, review your pathology results, and remove your sutures.

Other Instruction

- Your surgeon may instruct you to take a calcium supplement and will inform you of the amount to take. Your calcium supplement should be readily available to you at all times. Examples of common available CALCIUM CARBONATE supplements include Tums, OsCal, and Caltrate. You may also be instructed to take prescription strength Vitamin D (Rocaltrol) by your surgeon.

CALL THE OFFICE IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- If your entire thyroid gland is removed (total thyroidectomy) or you had a parathyroidectomy, you may experience temporary hypocalcemia (low calcium levels).
- Symptoms of low calcium levels include:
- numbness or tingling around the mouth, lips, hands or feet • muscle spasms or cramps • heart palpitations • forgetfulness or hallucinations • increased fatigue • Increasing neck swelling or inability to swallow • Shortness of breath • Bleeding from your incision • Fever > 101 .5* F • Pain that is uncontrolled by pain medicine
- *In the event that you experience a medical emergency or are unable to contact the office, please go to the nearest Emergency Room

