

Thyroidectomy Post-Operative Instructions

For 14 days prior to surgery and 7 days following surgery, do not take Aspirin or aspirin products, including Alka-Seltzer, Aspergum, Ibuprofen, Advil or Motrin. Tylenol is permitted.

Neck pain and neck stiffness are common after surgery. Your doctor will order a pain medication to help with discomfort. Avoid straining and heavy lifting for at least 1 week after surgery. Light to moderate activity as tolerated is okay. When resting, keep head elevated. This reduces bruising and swelling.

Start with a light meal or liquid diet on the first day after surgery and then advance to a regular diet as tolerated. Patients may notice a scratchy throat for a few days after surgery.

Some patients may experience a hoarse, whispery, or tired voice. The hoarseness is usually temporary, but in some cases it can be prolonged.

After surgery you will have an incision, which will be either sutured or covered with a surgical glue called Derma bond. We will bring you back in the office for removal of the sutures within 1-2 weeks post-op. The dermabond is a clear film over the incision that keeps the outer layer of skin together instead of using sutures. Derma bond stays in place for 5 to 10 days, and will begin to peel off skin on it's own. Do not scratch, rub or pick at Derma bond. Do not try to pull the dermabond off prematurely or apply tape to the incision. Do not apply ointment of any type to Derma bond. You may shower or bathe and get Derma bond mildly wet, but don't soak or scrub incision. Gently blot incision after showering. After Derma bond peels off or the incision is almost healed after the sutures removed, you can keep the area moist with Vit. E cream for 2-3 weeks. Protect area from sun exposure for 1 year with a sunscreen of SPF 30 or greater. Some numbness is common. We expect this area to be more red and swollen than the surrounding skin. Incision will gradually improve in appearance over the next year.

Occasionally a drain may be left in the incision to remove fluid that can build up. The drain is typically removed on the day following surgery.

Following either a partial or total thyroidectomy, you will likely be placed on Synthroid. Synthroid is a replacement for the natural hormone your thyroid makes. You will need to have lab work done regularly until your thyroid levels become stable. (T4 and TSH are the names of these tests). Once these levels are stable, you will be released to your primary care provider to monitor.

If you have a completion thyroidectomy or a total thyroidectomy, in addition to thyroid levels, we will also monitor your calcium levels. Since calcium levels can fluctuate after surgery, you need to watch for symptoms of low blood calcium. These symptoms include numbness of the fingers or lips, muscle cramps, or facial twitching. If you notice any of these symptoms, notify our office. You will need to take a calcium supplement regularly.

Please contact our office if have any questions or problems (309) 268-3200.