

POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

Thyroidectomy

(total or partial)

What to Expect After Surgery

- **Medications:** Pain medications, an antibiotic, and/or calcium will be given to you after surgery. Be sure to take plenty of liquids with your medications, as they may cause constipation. You may also take over the counter Colace® (Docusate), a gentle stool softener, once or twice a day if needed. Stop this medication if you develop loose stools or diarrhea.
- **Fatigue:** You can expect to feel very tired for the first week after surgery. This is normal and most patients plan on taking at 3-7 days off of work to recover. Every patient is different and some return to work sooner.
- **Diet:** After surgery it is not uncommon to have some nausea and occasional vomiting. Eat a bland light meal or a liquid diet on the first day after surgery. Increase to your regular diet as tolerated.
- **Postoperative Visits:** You should have an appointment with the clinic the next day or in the following days. You will also see your surgeon 1-2 weeks after your surgery to discuss your pathology results. Call our office if you do not have an appointment already scheduled. Please call your endocrinologist if you have one after your surgery to schedule a follow up with them.

What to Avoid After Surgery

- **Straining:** Avoid heavy lifting of more than 10 pounds, straining, and strenuous exercise for at least 2 weeks.
- **Aspirin or Non-steroidal Anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) medications:** Aspirin® and NSAIDs such as Motrin®, Advil®, and Aleve® should be stopped 2 weeks prior to surgery. These medications may cause bleeding and should be avoided for 1-2 weeks after surgery.

Postoperative Care Instructions

- **Drain Care:** You may have a drain in your incision. If so, keep the drain site clean and dry. Your nurse or doctor will remove the drain in a few days. Call the office if you are unsure when to return for removal of your drain. Removal is simple and does not require anesthesia, the nurse or doctor will remove any suture(s) and take the drain out. You may experience some brief, slight discomfort when the drain is removed.
- **Incision Care:** Keep the incision site clean and dry. There may be surgical glue in place, which will fall off on its own. If you do have a drain, once the drain is removed, you may shower, but do not scrub at your incision. This usually occurs a few days after surgery. Do not soak your incision in a tub or in a pool, as this may introduce infection. Wait until the incision is healed and your doctor tells you it is safe.

When to Call After Surgery

- Tingling or numbness around your mouth or extremities as well as muscle spasms may be a sign of low calcium. Call the office immediately if you have these symptoms after a total thyroidectomy.
- Redness, swelling, or increase in pain around the incision
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Fever higher than 101°F
- Severe diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
- Any other concerning signs or symptoms