

Thyroidectomy

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Sleep with your head elevated for the first 48 hours using two pillows or by sleeping in a recliner.
- Take your pain medications as prescribed by the doctor.
- You should plan for 1 week away from work. If your job requires manual labor, lifting, or straining then you should be out of work for 2 weeks (or limited to light duty) until 2 weeks after surgery.
- Apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment to the incision site 3 times daily. Do this by washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water, and then gently coat the wound with ointment using your finger. If you have a history of eczema, apply petroleum jelly to the wound 3 times daily instead of the antibiotic ointment.
- If Steri strips cover the incision, **DO NOT** use ointment or Vaseline.
- **DO NOT** get the wound wet for 48 hours after your surgery.
- Allow soap and water to run over the wound.
- **DO NOT** scrub or manipulate the wound for 7 days.
- **DO NOT** rub the wound with a towel; pat the area dry.
- **DO NOT** take aspirin or any blood thinners as they increase the risk of having a post-operative bleed into the neck tissues or neck wound. Generally, ibuprofen is avoided for the 1st week after thyroid surgery.
- **DO NOT** do any heavy lifting or straining for 2 weeks following the surgery.
- Follow up with the doctor 1 week after surgery.
- If you have been prescribed narcotics, it is important not to drive or operate machinery or engage in climbing activities due to risk of injury to yourself or others. **NO** driving within 10 hours of narcotic use.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

- It is normal to feel nauseous from the anesthesia.
- It is normal to experience a mild sore throat for 2-3 days following your Thyroidectomy. This usually does not interfere with swallowing.
- It is normal to have mild to moderate neck pain for several days after surgery.
- It is normal to have mild redness and swelling around the wound and this will decrease over the 2 weeks following surgery.
- It is normal to have a low-grade fever.
- If your entire thyroid gland was removed, you will be placed on thyroid replacement medication. You also may be placed on calcium medication or Tums for a time after surgery.

CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN IF YOU EXPERIENCE

- Difficulty breathing (first call 911).
- Neck swelling, especially rapidly progressive neck swelling.
- Numbness or tingling in your fingertips or lips.
- Muscle cramps or spasms, but not just neck muscle cramps. (Neck tension for several days is normal).
- Bleeding from the wound.
- Purulent discharge (pus) coming from the wound.
- Increasing redness around the wound.
- Choking or coughing when drinking fluids.
- Fever greater than 101.1°.