



Postoperative instructions for Thyroidectomy

1. The surgery will require 2 to 4 hours of general anesthesia.
2. It may be a day surgery or require hospital admission.
3. There will be a dressing wrapped around your neck. Please leave it in place. It is usually removed the day after surgery.
4. There will be a drain placed during the surgery. This will be removed between 2 and 5 days after the surgery. You will be asked to record the drain fluid output.
5. Bleeding after any surgery is a risk. If persistent bleeding occurs after thyroid surgery, a return to the operating room may be necessary to stop the bleeding. Bleeding after thyroid surgery will usually present with a sudden increase in anterior neck swelling deep to the incision.
6. Sutures/stitches will be removed between 7 and 10 days after surgery. The length of the incision for the surgery will vary between patients. It is important to avoid sun exposure to the scar for 6 months. Most of the time, the scar is acceptable. However, some patients may be unhappy with the neck scar. Scar revision may be an option.
7. The nerves to one or both of your vocal cords may be weak or nonfunctional after thyroid surgery. This may cause you to be hoarse. If the nerves are intact, the hoarseness usually resolves within several weeks. There is a 1-3% chance that you will have a permanent hoarseness after the surgery. If one of the nerves never regains function, future surgeries may be necessary to improve the voice quality. If both nerves are nonfunctional, you will have difficulty breathing after surgery and will require a tracheotomy. These complications are not expected but you need to be aware that the possibilities exist. Your blood calcium levels will decrease after thyroid surgery. It will usually return to normal within one week. Calcium levels will be followed with blood tests after surgery until the levels return to normal. There is a 1-3% chance that calcium levels will never return to normal and you will need to take calcium and vitamin D supplements forever.
8. Please no physical activity other than walking for 10 days after your surgery.
9. You will be prescribed pain medication for after your surgery. Antibiotics may be prescribed.
10. Please sleep with your head elevated in a recliner or on 4 pillows for at least the first two nights after surgery.
11. After the dressing is removed, apply over the counter Bacitracin antibiotic ointment to the incision three times a day for 10 days.

I, _____, confirm that I have read and understand the information provided before the date of surgery.

Signature

Date