

POST OPERATIVE CARE FOR THYROIDECTOMY

1. *Activity:* You will be hospitalized for at least one night following your thyroid procedure. I will see you in recovery and the morning after surgery to ensure that you are recovering well. Once discharged home please rest and stay indoors especially for the first 24hrs. Restrict physical activity to a minimum (including all types of sexual activity). Increased activity increases your blood pressure and will increase your risk of postoperative bleeding. Sleep with the head elevated for the first 48 hours. You may use two pillows to do this or sleep in a reclining chair. An ice pack placed on your neck maybe soothing. No heavy lifting or straining is allowed for 2-3 weeks following the surgery. Because driving requires quick neck movements and wearing a seat belt (that crosses your neck) restrict your driving while you recover from surgery. You should plan for at least 2 weeks away from work. If your job requires manual labor, lifting or straining then you will be out of work for 3 weeks.
2. *Diet:* Within the first 24hrs stick to clear fruit juices and slowly progress to your usual diet. Generally, patients experience a mild sore throat for 2-3 days following thyroidectomy. This usually does not interfere with swallowing.
3. *Medication:* Patients report mild to moderate neck pain for several days following thyroidectomy. This is usually well controlled with prescription strength oral pain medications. Please take the pain medication I prescribe you. You should avoid non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen (Excedrin, Motrin, Naprosyn, Advil) because these drugs are mild blood thinners and will increase your chances of having a post-operative bleed into the neck tissues or neck wound. Sometimes ointment or thyroid hormone replacement is also prescribed. Please use as instructed.
4. *Fevers:* It is not unusual to have low-grade fever postoperatively, however if it persists take Tylenol. If it does not resolve call the medical offices.
5. *Wound Care:* Do not wash or manipulate the neck wound for 48 hours following the thyroidectomy (except to apply ointment). Please take a moment to look at the wound in the mirror prior to your discharge from the hospital. You will find that the skin has been closed with sutures or with surgical glue that are self absorbing and do not require removal. Mild redness and swelling around the wound is normal and will decrease over the 4 weeks following surgery. If you have questions about the appearance of the wound you may ask your nurse or me prior to heading home. If a drain has been placed in the neck home care of the drain will be given prior to discharge. You may shower and allow the wound to get wet 72 hours following the surgery. However do not scrub or manipulate the wound for 7 days. Do not soak the wound in a bath tub. Pat the area dry, don't rub it with a towel.

6. *Post-op appointments:* Your follow-up appointment in the office will be 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 me office when you arrive home from the hospital. At the post-operative visit, the pathology report is reviewed.

Please call my office immediately if you experience:

- *Difficulty breathing or progressive hoarseness**
- *Neck swelling or progressive difficulty swallowing**
- *Numbness or tingling in your fingertips or lips**
- *Muscle cramps or spasms**
- *Active bleeding from the wound**
- *Choking or coughing when drinking liquids**
- *Purulent discharge (pus) coming from the wound**
- *Increasing redness around the wound**

There are no silly or dumb questions. Please call the medical office day or night if you have a question regarding your care.

7. Medical office number:

8. 909-599-6611