

POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THYROID AND / OR PARATHYROID SURGERY

Please review the general preoperative instructions. For the first few days after surgery, you are encouraged to rest. **Do not participate in any strenuous activity which may raise your blood pressure or heart rate** until your doctor believes you are adequately healed. This includes going to work if your job requires physical exertion. Expect to miss a few days of work after your surgery. **Do not sit on the couch or in bed all day, get up and walk around as this will help prevent complications.** When to resume normal activities can be discussed during your post-operative visits. In the meantime, **resume all of your routine medications prescribed by your physicians with the exception of blood thinning medications such as Plavix and/or Coumadin (warfarin).**

After surgery, you will have a small dressing over the incision that should be left in place until your first post-operative clinic visit. **It is normal to have some bloody drainage, however, a brisk bleed or a steady stream of bloody drainage should be reported to your doctor.**

Some mild puffiness/swelling of the surgical site is not uncommon, however, if this is dramatic or continues to enlarge, contact your surgeon. If the area around the incision becomes increasingly painful, red or swollen, or if this yellow drainage develops from the incision, contact your physician as these may be signs of infection.

Skin incisions typically do not become water tight until approximately 24 hours after surgery. For this reason, **do not expose the area to water until one day after surgery.** After the first day, it is acceptable to shower and let soap and water run over the incision and blot dry – do not scrub or wipe the area. Do not soak or bathe the area until after your first post-operative visit.

Use ice packs as tolerated over incision and surgical site for the first day or two after surgery. Also, **sleep with your head slightly elevated for the first few nights.** You may use two or more pillows. Following these recommendations will help prevent some of the swelling and stuffiness as well as help your body stop any bleeding.

Some moderate pain is to be expected. The nurse may give you pain medication prior to your discharge from the recovery room. The doctor has also given you a prescription for pain medication. Always take pain medication with or after food. **Do not take any pain medications except for the prescription you were given or plain Tylenol. (All other over the counter pain medications increase the risk of bleeding after surgery).**

You may experience some nausea for the first day after the surgery. Time and fluids help to alleviate the side effects of anesthesia. The nurses will help you to determine when and what you should first eat. You will usually begin with clear fluids and advance to solids as tolerated.

If you develop symptoms of low calcium (numbness/tingling of the lips, fingers, or toes; muscle stiffness, weakness, or spasm) notify your physician during the day as you may require an increased dose of your calcium supplements.

The first post-operative appointment will be scheduled approximately 1 week after surgery to check on the incision and remove any stitches that may require removal. It is imperative for the most successful outcome that you keep all of your postoperative appointments.