

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THYROIDECTOMY

Diet

Patients who have received general anesthesia may experience nausea and occasionally, vomiting. It is therefore preferable to eat a bland light meal or a liquid diet on the first day after the surgery. Regular diet may be resumed the next day. Also, pain pills may cause nausea if taken on an empty stomach. It would be better to take those pills with a piece of toast or food.

Activity and Wound Care

Elevate the head as much as possible. Head elevation reduces bruising and swelling. Occasionally, you may notice that the bruises or swelling have migrated to lower regions of the body. Avoid straining and heavy lifting, but do not stay in bed. Walk or move your legs as much as possible to prevent blood clots and gradually resume your normal activity. You may have a dressing or your wound may be exposed.

For exposed wounds:

If your wound is not sealed with acrylic (Dermabond), keep the exposed wound dry. Avoid showers. You may take a bath with lukewarm (not hot) water. If accidentally, water reaches the wound, dry it immediately with a clean towel. Make sure you have someone with you in the house incase you feel drowsy or weak from taking pain killers. Clean the wound once a day. This is best done with a cotton swab dipped in 3% hydrogen peroxide. If you have not received a prescription for antibiotic ointment, use over-the-counter triple antibiotic. Apply a scanty amount on the suture line. At times, you may not see the sutures because they have been placed inside the wound. On other occasions, there may be metallic staples instead of sutures. Occasionally, a thin film of clear adhesive is placed over the wound to protect it and allow you to take a shower.

Wounds with dressings or drains:

In rare instances, you may have a dressing or a drain. Unless specifically instructed, do not remove them. Avoid showers and keep the dressing dry. Some dressings may be sutured to the skin. Do not attempt to remove them. Drainage is expected for two to three days after surgery. Just kink the drain tubing, before detaching the bulb and emptying it. By kinking the tubing, you prevent air and old drainage from being sucked back into the wound.

Medications

An antibiotic is usually prescribed for seven to ten days following the surgery. You may also receive a prescription for painkillers in the form of hydrocodone. These products cause somnolence, drowsiness and constipation. **DO NOT DRIVE IF YOU**

ARE TAKING PAIN KILLERS. Occasionally, Zofran may be necessary for nausea or vomiting.

Follow-up

Please schedule a follow-up visit in the office: PHONE: (703)941-9552.