

# THYROID/PARATHYROID SURGERY POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

## PAIN

You will be given a prescription for Percocet, a mild medication for pain. Percocet should be taken as follows: 1 to 2 tablets every 4 hours for pain. You should avoid driving while taking Percocet because it can make you drowsy. Once pain improves or if the pain is not so severe, you may substitute Percocet with Tylenol at any time. In general, thyroid and parathyroid surgery is well-tolerated with minimal post-operative discomfort.

## INCISION

Any clear plastic bandage covering an incision (wound or surgical scar) can be removed on the day after surgery. Remove the gauze under the bandage as well. There are small paper tapes covering the incision under the gauze.

All incisions will be covered by small paper tapes. The incisions, which have been closed with dissolvable stitches, are under these pieces of tape. Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5 to 7 days. **DO NOT PLACE ANY ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENTS OR CREAMS ON THE NEW SCAR.**

In, some the wound will be covered by a surgical adhesive (a glue which holds the skin edges together). The incision will still have been closed with dissolvable stitches under the glue. **DO NOT PLACE ANY ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENTS OR CREAMS ON THE NEW SCAR.**

You might notice bruising around your incision or upper chest and/or slight swelling. In addition, the scar may become pink and hard. This hardening will peak at about 3 weeks and disappear over the next 2 to 3 months.

## SHOWERING/BATHING

You may shower at any time but no bathing until 2 weeks after surgery. When you shower, you can get the clear plastic bandage wet (it is water-proof) or wash over the paper tapes with soap and water (they can get wet). Do not remove the small pieces of tape by yourself – they will fall off on their own in 5 to 7 days. If no paper tapes have been placed, the surgical adhesive is waterproof as well.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

When you return home, your body will tell you how much and what kind of activity you are able to do. When you start experiencing soreness or pain, it's time to slow down or stop what you are doing. Remember – it is important to walk as much as possible for the first week after surgery. Try to return to your normal daily activities as much as possible after surgery. More vigorous activities, jogging, and/or aerobic exercises are not recommended for approximately one week.

## RECOVERY

Generally, you will need to spend one night in the hospital. Patients generally return to work an average of 5 to 7 days after surgery, depending on their pain and level of discomfort.

## DIET

No restrictions.

## FOLLOW-UP

You should follow-up in the office in two weeks for your post-operative visit. *If you had parathyroid surgery, you **must** have calcium levels drawn within 4 to 7 days of surgery.* You can either come to my office to pick up a lab slip or have your bloods drawn at your primary care physician's office or endocrinologist's office (whichever option is easier for you).

## WHEN TO CONTACT THE OFFICE

Please call the office if you experience any of the following:

- Persistent fever over 101° F
- Bleeding from the neck incision
- Increasing neck swelling
- Numbness or tingling around your mouth or fingertips
- Pain that is not relieved by your medications
- Chills
- Purulent drainage (pus) from the incision
- Redness surrounding the incision that is worsening or getting bigger

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