

Post-Operative Instructions after Thyroidectomy or Parathyroidectomy

1. It is OK to take a shower or a bath right away since skin glue is being used to cover your incision. Do not allow excessive water to pour over the incision.
2. No heavy lifting (nothing more than 15 lbs.) and no vigorous exercise until cleared by your surgeon.
3. Obtain all medications and use as directed.
 - You may need antibiotics.
 - Take pain medication as prescribed. It is OK to substitute Tylenol if the pain medication is too strong or causes nausea. We do not want you to take ibuprofen for two weeks.
 - Constipation is a common side effect of pain medications. Take a mild over-the-counter laxative if using the narcotic pain medicine. Avoid straining with bowel movements.
 - Follow-up with your endocrinologist for evaluation and need for thyroid replacement medication if you have had your entire thyroid removed.
4. Take all of your routine medications as prescribed, unless instructed otherwise by your surgeon. Any medications which thin the blood should be avoided (e.g., aspirin, Advil, Motrin, ibuprofen, Excedrin, Aleve, Celebrex, Naproxen) for the first 2 weeks after surgery.
5. It is possible for your body calcium level to temporarily drop after a total thyroidectomy or parathyroidectomy. If your calcium levels drop, the first symptoms noticed are numbness and tingling around the mouth and fingertips. We will commonly place you on an oral calcium regimen immediately after surgery while your remaining parathyroid glands wake up. They will then maintain normal calcium levels without any supplementation.
6. There are no diet restrictions. Tobacco use is not recommended since nicotine decreases blood flow to the healing tissues and can actually compromise wound healing.
7. Patients are usually seen back in the office 7 to 10 days after surgery to examine the incision and review pathology results.