



POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Total or Hemi Thyroidectomy

Care At Home

Wound care should be performed four (4) times a day for the first two (2) days. The site may need to be cleaned more frequently if there is oozing. *Keeping the site free of crusting is very important to reduce the risk of infection and minimize scar formation.*

Clean site by:

1. Rolling a Q-tip soaked with hydrogen peroxide over the incision site. If a crust has formed, remove this by repeating this step until removed.
2. Using a clean, dry Q-tip, cover the incision with a light coating of Bacitracin ointment.

After the second day, clean the site in the morning and evening only. You may shower and wash your hair, but after the area should be patted dry with a clean towel or blown dry with a hair dryer on the cool setting. If you are afraid that the wound will become dirty, a band-aid or gauze covering may be used. Please apply these loosely. The incision area must be kept protected from sunlight for at least 3 months, both with sunblock as well as physical barriers (hat, scarf, etc). Without such protection, sunlight exposure may lead to hyper-pigmentation.

If You Go Home With a Drain

The drain is often placed after any type of neck surgery to prevent a hematoma (blood collection under the skin) from forming. You will receive instructions from the nurse in the care of the drain if you go home with one. You will be required to keep the area where drain enters the skin clean using the steps outlined above followed by bacitracin application. Keep the drain bulb collapsed to indicate suction at all times. Strip the drain (to prevent any blockages from forming) and empty the drain bulb every 4 hours. Record how much blood is in the drain bulb before discarding.

Things to Watch Out For

Contact the surgeon should any of the following occur:

- Fever > 101.5
- Sudden swelling around the incision site
- Sudden increase in pain around the incision site
- Pus oozing out of incision
- Sudden increase in amount of blood evacuating into drain (if you go home with a drain)
- Any **numbness**, **tingling** around mouth or fingers

Follow-Up

Generally, the surgeon will need to see you in the office one week after the procedure in order to remove the sutures. If you go home with a drain, you will have follow-up in 1-2 days. If these appointments have not already been made for you, we will do so on the day of the procedure. Pathology results generally take 7-10 business days. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office at 540-347-0505.