

POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS FOR THYROID SURGERY

Things to do:

- **Medications:** Take your pain medication as ordered. Be sure to take these with food to reduce stomach upset. These may cause drowsiness, nausea, or constipation. Do not take additional Tylenol, as the pain medication usually has Tylenol in it. Do not drive or operate heavy machinery while on pain medications. You may or may not be given an antibiotic. If you are given one, take it all as directed.
- **Wound Care:** There may be a drain placed in your neck after surgery. The surgical nurses will instruct you on the care of that drain. If there is no drain, then the day after surgery you may remove the dressing. Usually a clear dressing is placed over the incision. This dressing protects the incision site. You may shower or bathe; just pat dry the area.
- **Diet:** Patients who have received general anesthesia may experience some stomach upset and occasionally vomiting. It is good to eat a bland light or liquid diet on the first day after surgery. A regular diet may be resumed the next day. Make sure you do drink a lot of fluids.
- **Activity:** Elevate your head at all times for the first 4-5 days after surgery, even while sleeping. You may shower or wash your hair. Make sure someone is at home with you in case you get drowsy or faint. Make sure the water is warm not hot.
- **Follow up:** The doctor will usually have you come back to the office the following day for the drain to be removed. If there is no drain then the doctor will usually want to see you back in the office 7-14 days after surgery. If you are uncertain call our office.
- At some point in your care your doctor may refer you to a specialist called an endocrinologist to evaluate your thyroid function and determine if thyroid hormone replacement is necessary.

Things NOT to do:

- Do not drive until you have good range of motion to your neck.
- Do not lift anything heavier than 15 pounds.
- Do not do any strenuous activity/exercising until your doctor says it is ok.
- Avoid straining with bowel movements – you may need to get an over-the-counter stool softener.
- Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen products (Motrin, Aleve, Excedrin, Midol, Naprosyn) or any other medications that may make you bleed easily one week before surgery and one week after surgery. If you are uncertain call your pharmacist or the nurse.
- Avoid direct sunlight to the area to avoid further scarring.

It is normal to have some discomfort after any surgery. You may have a sore throat or hoarseness from the tube which was placed in your throat during surgery to help you breathe. Our office personnel and your doctor are eager to support you through this process. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or problems. Call our office if you have excessive bleeding, swelling, increased warmth or redness at surgical site, drainage at surgical site, fever greater than 102, severe pain not relieved by pain medication, continued nausea and vomiting, shortness of breath, tingling or cramps in your hands, feet or lips or any other concerns.