

PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES

Post-Operative Instructions

Hemi-Thyroidectomy

PAIN:

You can expect pain after surgery. It is not unusual to have pain for 2-3 days after surgery or have difficulty swallowing. Take Tylenol™ (acetaminophen) as directed for pain management. Your surgeon may have also given you a prescription for extra pain medication, a narcotic. Please take the pain medication prescribed by your surgeon when needed. If you take narcotic medication, do not drive a car or drink alcohol while taking the medication. If you have nausea or vomiting you may buy Gravol™ (Dimenhydrinate) to take.

OPERATIVE SITE:

Your surgeon will tell you when the dressing will be changed. Try to keep your dressing dry. You may reinforce your dressing as needed. This is done by adding another layer of gauze over the existing dressing. You may have paper tapes (Steri-strips™) over your incision. Keep Steri-strips™ on for up to 7 days, if they have not fallen off on their own. If you have a drain, your surgeon will tell you when it will be removed. The nurse will teach you how to care for your drain. Try to sleep with your head upon extra pillows to help decrease swelling of your incision. Keep your incision dry for 48 hours. You may shower 48 hours after your surgery. You can let soapy water run over the incision. Pat your incision dry with a clean towel. Do not soak your incision.

ACTIVITY:

Avoid heavy lifting (anything greater than 10 pounds or 4.5 kg) or strenuous activity for 2 weeks after surgery. Gradually increase your activity each day with frequent rest periods. Avoid sitting for prolonged periods of time to help prevent blood clots. Your surgeon will advise you when you can return to work. Resume driving when you are pain free and are no longer on pain medication. You should be able to move your head in all directions without pain before driving. Do not swim or use hot tubs/saunas for 10 days after your surgery.

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Queensway
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DIET:

There are no food or drink restrictions after surgery. It is best to start on fluids and a light diet following your surgery. You may increase your diet to soft foods. If you have discomfort swallowing, it may be helpful to take pain medication 30 minutes before eating. Avoid hard or crunchy to swallow foods such as chips or crackers for a few days. Constipation may be a side effect of your pain pills. Increase the fibre in your diet and drink plenty of fluids to help prevent constipation. Good sources of fiber are fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals (All Bran™, Bran Flakes, Shreddies™ and Shredded Wheat).

You may also purchase an over the counter stool softener like Colace™ or a mild laxative if needed.

FOLLOW UP:

Your surgeon will advise you of your follow-up appointment; if you have not been informed about a follow-up appointment, contact your surgeon's office. A nurse from Day Surgery will call you the day after surgery to discuss any concerns you may have.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Your surgeon will advise you if you need to have blood work done to check your calcium levels after surgery. Your surgeon will also advise you if you need to take thyroid medication for the rest of your life. Resume your normal medication after surgery unless advised not to by your surgeon.

Call your surgeon immediately or go to the nearest Emergency Department if you have any of the following:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent hoarseness or loss of your voice
- Persistent difficulty swallowing
- Elevated temperature (38°C or 100.4°F) and/or chills lasting more than 24 hours
- Signs and symptoms of infection: your incision is red, hot, swollen, and/ or green-yellow pus is coming from your incision
- Severe pain that doesn't go away when you take pain medication
- Muscle cramping and/ or numbness
- Tingling around lips, fingers and toes

Patient safety is very important to Queensway Carleton Hospital. This information is provided to patients/families to help inform you of your essential role in your own safety.

The information contained in this booklet is not specific medical advice, nor a substitute for medical advice. For your safety, it is advised that you speak with your doctor and healthcare team about your particular healthcare needs.

Protect yourself! Clean your hands frequently and ask your healthcare providers and visitors to do the same. Clean hands save lives.

