



## Patient Information – Post-operative care

# Thyroidectomy

## Wound care

Part or all of your thyroid gland has been removed during surgery. The incision has been temporarily numbed with local anaesthetic and sewn together with dissolvable stitches under the skin.

A dressing has been applied to the wound, often a skin adhesive and overlying paper tape such as Steristrips®. You can safely get the dressing wet in the shower and gently dab dry afterward

## Pain relief

Regular pain relief with paracetamol (e.g. Panadol®), 1g (two 500mg tablets), four times a day, for the first few days after leaving hospital provides sufficient pain relief for most people. It is safe to add an anti-inflammatory drug (e.g. Nurofen®) for most patients, but please check with your doctor if you have any concerns.

## Diet

Choose softer foods (e.g. soup, pasta, ice cream) for the first few days after surgery as your throat might be sore. Lozenges can also be soothing.

## Activity

To avoid developing a stiff neck, spend a few minutes, 3-4 times a day to do neck exercises. Carefully flex and extend your neck, rotate left and right and laterally flex by trying to touch each ear on the same shoulder. Gentle exercise such as walking is recommended to reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis. You should avoid more vigorous exercise for at least a week after surgery. Driving should be avoided if possible until review following discharge. Usually, I recommend 1-2 weeks off work.

## Complications

Serious wound problems after leaving hospital are rare. However, minor neck swelling around the scar is common and will settle with time. If you develop difficulty breathing and/or significant neck swelling then call an ambulance on 000.

Infection is uncommon, but may be suspected if the wound becomes increasingly tender and red. You might start to feel unwell with a fever.

Your calcium level will be checked before leaving hospital and you may need to take calcium and Vitamin D supplements.

The quality of your voice may have altered and frequently improves over the coming days and weeks.

## Appointment

Your follow-up appointment will be made at the time of your surgery booking.

Please ring the rooms (03 9116 4777) if you do not have an appointment.

## Contact

Any concerns, please contact Dr Sarah Birks or the hospital.