

Thyroidectomy

After Visit Summary

This is general information. Please see your After Visit Summary for how to take care of yourself after surgery.

Your health care team will work with you to understand any challenges you have after your hospital stay. This will help your team work toward a plan to make sure you have the right care and support to help manage your health after you leave the hospital.

Your Surgery

You have had surgery to remove all or part of your thyroid, a gland in the front of your neck that is divided into two halves. A thyroid gland releases hormones that control how much energy you have and how fast your body uses this energy.

What to Expect After Surgery

- It will take six months to a year for your incision to heal completely. Most of the healing takes place in the first 6 to 8 weeks.
- During the first few weeks after surgery, you may have itching, numbness, pulling, tingling, tightness and swelling as your incision heals. This is normal.

Before the Surgery

- Tell your health care provider if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have a latex allergy
 - have diabetes
 - take a blood-thinner medicine.

- Remove any jewelry or piercings.
- Arrange to have someone drive you home. You will not be able to drive after the surgery.

Pain Relief

- Take any prescription or over-the-counter medicine as directed.

Activity

- Follow your health care provider's directions for moving your neck.
- For the first few days at home, continue the activity level you were at in the hospital.
- Slowly increase your activity level. Walk short distances several times a day and increase the distance as your strength allows. You may need more rest after surgery.
- Your health care provider will tell you when it's OK for you to shower, drive, return to work, exercise, lift, and have sex.
- Slowly return to your regular level of activity.
- Follow your health care provider's directions for how much you can safely lift.
- Rest as needed.
- Avoid tobacco and secondhand smoke. They can slow your recovery.

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Incision Care

- Steri-Strips® (paper-like tape) may have been placed on your incision. You may peel them off after 7 days.
- Follow any directions your health care provider gives you.
- Do not use lotions, creams, ointments, gels or powders on your incision site.

Food and Beverages

- Eat well-balanced meals. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- Drink more liquids.
- Avoid alcohol while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you:

- have a temperature of 101 F or higher
- have new pain or pain you can't control
- have bleeding that won't stop
- have trouble breathing, or significant change in your voice
- have tingling of your face, fingers, toes, or uncontrolled muscle contracting
- have signs of infection at your incision site:
 - pain
 - swelling
 - redness
 - odor
 - warmth
 - green or yellow discharge
- are unable to get out of bed
- have nausea (upset stomach) or vomiting (throwing up) that won't stop
- have any questions or concerns.

Follow-up Appointment

Please keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider or specialist, even if you are feeling well.