



Han G. Sohn
MD, FACS

Post-Operative Care and Instructions for Thyroidectomy / Submaxillary Gland Excision

1. After surgery, you will have a large compression dressing on your neck. This is used to decrease swelling and bleeding. You must keep the dressing intact until directed by your doctor. Please try to avoid getting the dressing wet. If it loosens, it is okay to retighten. If the dressing is too loose, it will not offer any compression and thus will not be helpful. If there is a lot of drainage on the dressing, it is okay to change to a clean dressing. Typically, we require that the compression dressing remains for 24 hours.
2. You may or may not have a drain in place when you leave the hospital. Your doctor will let you know if you do have a drain and make arrangements for it to be removed in the office. If the drain falls out, let us know but we usually do not replace it.
3. Once the dressings are removed, local wound care can be started. Diluted peroxide with water (1 tsp peroxide and 1 tsp water) is used to clean the wound on a q-tip twice a day. Then apply an antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Bactroban or Triple antibiotic ointment). Local wound care is usually followed for one week after surgery. Numbness around the incision is normal and usually resolves over time.
4. Scar care: once the wound is healed, your doctor will recommend an anti-scar treatment. There are over the counter anti-scar creams as well as treatments available in the office. Anything that we do initially, can affect how the scar looks in the future. We usually recommend using an anti-scar cream for 6 weeks after surgery.
5. Take post-operative antibiotics as prescribed and pain medications as needed.
6. Sleep with the head of bed elevated for the first 2-3 days post-operatively. This can help to decrease the swelling and make you feel more comfortable.
7. Avoid lifting anything >25lbs for about 1 week. Usually after about a week normal activities can be resumed. Your doctor will help advise you on when you can return to work.
8. You may experience a sore throat or fullness to the throat. This gets better with time.
9. Hoarseness can develop due to swelling around the nerves to the voice box. This usually resolves with time.

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10. Diet: Although there are no dietary restrictions after surgery, a soft diet may feel better for the first couple of days. You may experience nausea after anesthesia but you can advance to a regular diet as tolerated.
11. If your thyroid gland is removed, sometimes this temporarily can cause your parathyroid gland to not function as well. This can result in tingling around the mouth due to low calcium levels. Report any of these signs to our office or go to the emergency room if signs are significant. Calcium replacement may be required.

Please call our office if you have any questions or concerns. If you develop bleeding, swelling, redness, drainage or increased discomfort to the surgical area let us know, you may need to be evaluated.

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