



Ear, Nose & Throat
Specialist of St. Cloud

POSTOPERATIVE THYROID or PARATHYROID SURGERY

- Your incision is covered with steri-strips, do not remove them. It is okay if they fall off on their own.
- **Notify us immediately if your neck is swollen, firm and tender or you have a fever greater than 101.5 and your neck is red and tender.**
- You may go home with a drain, make sure the bulb is to suction and record all drain output before discarding it.
- You can shower and wash your hair, 48 hours after your surgery, but do not soak or scrub the incision. After showering, use a cool hair dryer to dry the incision.
- The scar may become pink and hard. This hardening will peak at about 3 weeks and may result in some tightness or difficulty swallowing, which will disappear over the next 2 to 3 months.
- If you were taking thyroid hormone tablets before your operation, continue with the same dose, unless advised differently. If you were not taking thyroid hormone prior to your operation, we may prescribe these tablets following surgery.
- **You may experience pain with swallowing**, this is normal.
- Your voice may go through some temporary changes with fluctuations in volume and clarity (hoarseness). Generally, it will be better in the mornings and "tire" toward the end of the day. This can last for variable periods of time, but should clear in 8-10 weeks.
- In about 8% of patients who have thyroid surgery, the parathyroid glands do not function properly immediately after thyroid surgery. This is usually temporary and causes the blood calcium level to drop below normal (hypocalcemia). Symptoms of hypocalcemia include numbness and tingling in your hands, soles of your feet and around your lips. Some patients experience a "crawling" sensation in the skin, muscle cramps or headaches. These symptoms appear between 24 and 48 hours after surgery. It is rare for them to appear after 72 hours. Please notify us right away if you have these symptoms. You may need to be supplemented with calcium tablets and get routine calcium levels checked. The hypocalcemia should disappear in 7 to 10 days.