



Thyroid Surgery

Instructions After Surgery

What is expected after thyroid surgery?

- 1.** Pain is often mild to moderate. Tylenol alone may be adequate. If required your doctor may prescribe pain medication.
- 2.** A bandage is sometimes left in place at the time of your discharge. If so, follow instructions provided for when to remove the bandage or follow up with your surgeon to have it removed.
- 3.** Sometimes a drain (small plastic tube) is used to evacuate fluid from the operative site after surgery. If this was left in place at the time of your discharge, you will need to empty it periodically and record the amount you empty. Instructions in how to do this should have been provided by your nurse before discharge. The drain is generally removed in a few days or whenever the amount coming out has become very minimal.
- 4.** Once the bandage has been removed, it is OK to get the incision area wet 48 hours after the surgery.
- 5.** Minimal oozing from the operative site is normal in the first 2 days.
- 6.** Following showering, apply an antibiotic ointment to the incision twice daily. (Bacitracin, Polysporin or Neo-Sporin are all OK.)



What is the usual follow-up for thyroid surgery?

Usually, you will be seen the week after your surgery. Contact the office for an appointment.

When should I contact the physician after surgery?

1. Rapidly increasing swelling of the operative site.
2. Difficulty breathing.
3. Frequent or severe muscle spasms.
4. Fever over 101.5 degrees.
5. Discharge from the wound.

What should I avoid after surgery?

1. Avoid heavy lifting or straining. You can resume 50% of your exercise plan 1 week after surgery and return to normal after 2 weeks.
2. Avoid travel by plane in the first week without discussing with your doctor.

