

Wentworth Health Partners Head & Neck Specialty Group of NH

361 High Street Somersworth, NH 03878
Phone: (603) 692-4500 Fax: (603) 692-4520

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm
www.headandnecknh.com

PARTIAL OR TOTAL THYROIDECTOMY

ACTIVITY

- Most patients are able to return to a full-time work schedule in 1-2 weeks; however this may vary according to your job. It may take longer to return to heavy physical or other demanding work, or shorter if you are feeling well.
- Do NOT drive a car until you are able to turn the neck side to side, which may take 1-2 weeks. Do NOT drive while you are taking the prescribed pain medications.

NOTE: If you had a total thyroidectomy you will be spending the night at the hospital for observation. If you had a partial thyroidectomy this is usually considered same day surgery.

DIET

- You may have temporary throat discomfort or difficulty swallowing. This is due to the surgery around your larynx (voice box) and esophagus (swallowing tube). These symptoms will gradually improve over the course of several weeks.
- Drink and eat foods that can be swallowed easily, e.g. juice, soup, gelatin, applesauce, scrambled eggs or mashed potatoes. You may be able to return to your usual diet in a couple of days as tolerated.

INCISION CARE

- You may have a bulky dressing around your neck that will be removed during your first post-op visit which is usually 1-3 days after surgery.
- You will have Steri-Strips applied over your incision site, which will be removed during your first follow up visit. Please leave them in place until removed by the doctor.
- You may shower after your first post-op visit but please do not swim or soak in a tub for at least 2 weeks after surgery. After you are done showering just pat your incision dry.
- Mild swelling at the incision site will go away in 4-6 weeks. The pink line will slowly fade to white during the next 6-12 months.
- Use a sunscreen (SPF-30 or higher) or wear a scarf for protection when in the sun for the first 6 months to a year as the sun can darken your scar.

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COMMON PROBLEMS

- Numbness of the skin under the chin or above the incision site is normal and should go away in a few weeks.
- You may feel a lump or pressure in your throat when swallowing for a few days.
- Your incision may feel itchy while it heals. Avoid rubbing or scratching if possible.
- You may feel neck stiffness, tightness, a pulling feeling, mild aching chest discomfort, headache, ear pain, and congestion. Tylenol will help. You can also put heat on the area using a hot water bottle or heating pad.

CALL THE DOCTOR IF:

- You have a fever greater than 101 degrees, chills, lightheadedness, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting, numbness or tingling in your fingers, hand or mouth, muscle spasms, or if you notice signs of wound infection (redness, tenderness, or drainage of the incision).