



Potomac Ear, Nose & Throat, PLLC

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Discharge Instructions for Total Thyroidectomy

What to Expect: The night after surgery may be characterized by some discomfort, nausea, and incisional pain. All of these complaints are normal and usually well controlled with medications. Typically on the day after surgery, the drain (if present) will be removed, as well as your neck dressings and bandages. You may notice some numbness, slight swelling, discoloration, and redness around the incision. Your neck may tingle and feel tight with movement. These findings are normal and should improve with time.

In addition, it is possible that you may develop a fever during the night after surgery. This is common and should resolve with deep breathing, increased activity (walking, etc.), and Tylenol. If you continue to have a persistent fever greater than 101.5 degrees for more than 24-36 hours, or have questions regarding your care before the follow-up visit, please call the office and speak to a nurse (9am-5pm) or the physician on-call after hours

Wound care: Your incision is kept intact with sutures and SteriStrips. Sutures will be removed in approximately 1 week and the SteriStrips will fall off naturally or removed in the office. You may shower after being discharged, but we do not recommend tub bathing or swimming for at least 2 weeks. Please keep the incision clean and dry. You do not need an outer dressing. If you notice any signs of infection (redness, swelling, pain or drainage from the incision), please call immediately.

Diet: You may resume a normal diet as tolerated. Please avoid alcohol while taking prescription narcotic pain medications. Sometimes patients may develop constipation after surgery due to a change in diet and/or narcotic pain medication.

Activity: You should try to avoid excessive talking, hard chewing, strenuous physical activity and heavy lifting (more than a telephone book), for approximately 14 days after surgery. Light exercise and walking are encouraged. When sleeping and lying on your back, you should do so with your head elevated on 2-3 pillows in order to minimize incisional swelling. While on narcotic pain medications (if prescribed), do not operate heavy machinery or automobiles.

Medications:

*Take the pain medication as prescribed.

*You may take an over the counter stool softener such as Colace while you are on a narcotic pain medicine.

*You may be prescribed thyroid hormone replacement after your surgery. Please take as prescribed.

*You may be instructed to take a calcium supplement such as Caltrate-D. If instructed, take 1 tablet three times a day for 1 week, then twice a day for 1 week, then once a day for 1 week.

Follow-up appointment: Call the office to make an appointment in 7-10 days to have your sutures removed. Your pathology results should be available at that time and we will be able to discuss the results during your follow-up visit.