Postoperative Thyroid Surgery Instructions

Dr. Healy - Dr. Keele - Dr. Tubbs - Dr. Ramsey

Contact Information:

- Glacier Ear Nose and Throat (406) 752-8330
 - 9am to 5pm, Monday-Friday
 - After 5 pm and weekends, an "on call" provider is available.
- The HealthCenter (406) 751-7550

When should I call my doctor?

- If I am worried, my doctor is worried! I will call my doctor's office.
- If I have numbness, tingling or muscle cramps in my hands, feet or lips, I will call my doctor, go to the Emergency Room or if alone call 911.
 - I may have dangerously low calcium levels.
 - I will not drive if I experience this.
- I will call if I have signs of an infection, such as redness, drainage, warmth, pain or swelling around my incision or a fever above 101.5 degrees.
- If I am short of breath or have chest pain with no activity, I will call my doctor's office.

What should I expect after surgery?

- I will have a sore throat and hoarse voice for several days.
- I will have painful swallowing for several days.

When will I see my doctor?

- I need to have a follow-up appointment with my doctor in 1 week after surgery.
- I will have my thyroid hormone levels checked one month from surgery. I can do this with my primary care doctor or my doctor at Glacier Ear, Nose and Throat.

How will I take my medication?

- I will take my medication EXACTLY as instructed.
- I will not take calcium within 3 hours of taking my thyroid medication (Levothyroxine or Synthroid).
- I will take calcium (like Tums), 3 times per day for 2 weeks. If I take reflux medication (like Prilosec or Prevacid), I will not take calcium within 4 hours of taking reflux medication.

What about my pain?

- · I will have some discomfort.
- I may use over the counter Ibuprofen or Tylenol.
- I may be given a prescription for narcotic pain medication if Ibuprofen and Tylenol is not enough.
 - I will not take extra Tylenol if I am taking Norco, Lortab or Percocet because they have it in it.
 - I will not drive if I am taking narcotic pain medication.
 - Narcotic pain medication may cause constipation. I will drink extra fluids and I may need a stool softener.
- I will take acid reflux medication if my doctor instructs me to.
- I will follow pain medication instructions given by my nurse or pharmacist.

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How do I care for my surgical site?

- I may shower and get the incision wet 3 days after surgery.
- I may not soak in a tub or go in a pool.
- I may remove the covering over my incision in 3 days.
- I will apply antibiotic ointment (i.e. Bacitracin) to the site 2 times a day for 7 10 days.
- My stitches will be removed in 1 week.

If I have a drain, I will:

- Empty and record the amount every 4 hours.
- * When it drains less than 30 ml in 24 hours, I will call the clinic to have it removed.
- If I do not live nearby, I may have it removed in my local doctor's office.
- The drain should not be in longer than 7 days.
- I will call the clinic if the drainage is more than 30 ml in 24 hours.
- I will call the clinic if the drainage becomes bloody, milky in color or looks like puss.

What about activity?

 I will avoid heavy lifting, bending, straining or stooping for 2 weeks after surgery. These things may cause bleeding.

DRAIN RECORD

Date	Time	Amount
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